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FROM ENGLAND TO SYDNEY ON BOARD THE 'SAMUEL

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1890.

Virginie.

A TALE OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BY VAL PRINSEP, ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE CONCIERGERIE.

THE Conciergerie to which Rousselet was taken was the prison attached to the Palais de Justice, to which all those who were afterwards guillotined were brought before their trial. In the little office of the prison he was handed over to Le Beau, the principal gaoler. Nortier produced the act of arrest, and his name was entered on the books. Then the guard withdrew.

Rousselet took off his hat and bowed. 'Adieu, my dear colleague,' he said with politeness to this man. 'We may not meet again, but, mark this, it will not be long before thou wilt follow me.'

Nortier scowled. He could make no reply.

'No. 13,' cried Le Beau; 'the *citoyen* is well recommended, let him be placed *à la paille*.'

It was not yet daybreak when a turnkey, holding a lantern, opened the heavy door which led to the prison from the head gaoler's office. A huge dog, having smelt Rousselet as though to make his acquaintance, followed behind with his bloodshot eyes fixed on the new prisoner.

'Pay attention, Brutus,' growled the turnkey to the dog, not to Rousselet; 'this is another of thy charges.'

There was a fetid odour in the corridor through which they passed that made Rousselet feel sick. By the light of the lantern he perceived many shut doors, from the other side of which he heard strange sounds, groans or curses.

'Are there many prisoners here?' he asked.

'A goodish lot,' answered the turnkey surlily.

'It seems pretty full.'

'And yet it gets empty rapidly. It is like the inexhaustible bottle of the conjuror, however much you take out the bottle is always full.' And the fellow laughed at his grim joke.

They ascended a stair to the first floor. The corridors here were rather more airy, but there was still the indescribable smell Rousselet had perceived when he entered.

'Thou art lucky to find place here,' growled the turnkey; 'those below are not happy.' He then opened one of the large doors in the corridor. 'Enter,' he said.

It was a large room divided by planks about six feet high into small cells, each containing a small bunk with some straw on it; all these seemed occupied but one.

'No. 13, that is thy number; not a lucky one either. Thou hadst better recollect it,' growled the turnkey.

Rousselet noticed that when they entered the room the occupants of the cells roused themselves, and came forward. Some asked questions of the turnkey, some expostulated at being disturbed, some grumbled, some tried to joke. To all the turnkey kept the same sullen silence. He and the dog, to whom all the prisoners seemed to show great attention, were no sooner out of the place, and the door locked, than the prisoners crowded together, talking eagerly. The grey of the damp March morning was just breaking, and its mysterious light added to the strangeness of the scene. As Rousselet leant against the door of his cell, he could recognise in some of these prisoners men who had been prominent during the early years of the Revolution. To them Rousselet was unknown, for he had through modesty, or rather want of personal ambition, contrived to efface himself. But them he knew. Why were they here? Were these men counter-revolutionary—these who had once been in the front rank of those patriots who worked in the cause of liberty?

The little crowd of prisoners eagerly debated for a few minutes. Then one of them, a man small in stature but well-proportioned, with a singularly bright eye and intelligent look, bowing cour-

teously, asked his name. There was something so attractive about this man, whose thin and careworn face might have belonged to an old man, but whose figure was young and vigorous, that Rousselet felt himself drawn towards him. He civilly gave his name. The prisoner then welcomed him in the names of the rest.

'Monsieur,' he said, 'amid the anxieties which naturally must fall to the lot of those who enter here, you will find a frankness and honesty of speech you would in vain search for among those who are free. When then we ask to be allowed to sympathise with you in your misfortune, we do not seek to intrude into your confidence. We have each and all our troubles and cares; we have each and all to appear before that odious tribunal, from which we none of us hope to escape; but while here we strive to live like brothers, nor do we, by such simple means as we have in our power, refrain from indulging in innocent merriment. If such gaiety, by which we endeavour to sustain our courage, should offend you, we beg you to pardon us. Those who have been, as I have, many months in this dreadful place must needs employ every artifice possible to enable them to forget, that they may not fall a prey to despair.'

Rousselet was touched by the words of this man, and more by his musical voice and sympathetic manner: 'Monsieur,' he said, 'believe me, I enter this place without hope, I can only leave it to die; but that my courage will fail me or my nerves give way during the short time I am here I have no fear. That my time will be short I am convinced. I have too deeply offended the tyrant who now rules our destinies to hope to be forgiven. For your kind words of sympathy, new to me I can assure you, I heartily thank you. You will do me the greatest kindness in leaving me to myself. I have no fear of my own thoughts, and nothing on my conscience to lead me to dread the sharp knife which will soon end my hopeless existence.'

The little man, whose name was Riouffe, took Rousselet by the hand, and gently said, 'You are a brave man, that I see; it will do you no harm to know that we all here are in sympathy with you.' He then introduced himself and those who were around.

'Citoyen,' said another of the prisoners, 'you have just come from the world outside, with which many of us have had no communication for some time; would you then be pleased to tell us how things march? Is there any hope?'

Rousselet expressed his willingness to give them all the news he could; 'but,' said he, 'I can give you no hope.'

He answered all the questions they put to him to the best of his ability. He found in some things they were better posted than he. For instance, Riouffe told him that two days before, Hébert, Momoro, and Cloutz, with several others of the ultra-revolutionary party, had been brought to the prison. 'We saw them from our windows,' he cried, 'and when we recognised these bloody ruffians we were in hopes that the time had come for mercy. We have also read several of the numbers of the *Vieux Cordelier*, smuggled into the prison at the peril of our lives. For once we heard the voice of clemency raised from France herself, overcome as she is by despair, and drowned in the blood of Frenchmen. It was Camille Desmoulins who spoke! Surely then there is hope.'

But Rousselet could say nothing, he could give them no comfort. Camille Desmoulins, this newly converted apostle of mercy, was, he knew, likely enough to find his plea for mercy was his act of arrest.

'But since Hébert and Momoro are lost?' urged the prisoners.

Rousselet described the scene he had witnessed at the Jacobins, when Hébert and the extremists were denounced, only, in his modesty, he contrived to make his heroic opposition to Robespierre a small thing. He told them word for word the speech of the tyrant, and bade them glean from it what comfort they could.

Strange to say these men, with very few exceptions, were not cast down at the prospect. After debating with some vivacity on their chance of freedom, they soon broke into playful parodies of the scenes they might have to go through. They held a mock trial, in which the very manner of Fouquier Tinville was imitated. They sentenced one of their number to death, and held a mock execution. Rousselet, man of nerve as he was, was surprised to see how lightly they viewed their fate. When the prisoners were tired of their game, and the joke began to pall, they sat round Riouffe, and begged him to read them his last translation from the dialogues of Plato! Rousselet, too, drew near and listened to the musical voice of the reader, who had been among the noisiest of the jokers. The lofty thoughts of the noble Greek were new to Rousselet. It somehow comforted him to think that two thousand years ago, this Socrates, the wisest man of his day,

believed in the existence of a deity, and in the immortality of his soul. Involuntarily his thoughts wandered back to Virginie and little Jacques; he wondered whether they prayed for him now they knew his dire peril. He felt sure they would, and in the thought he found an unaccountable satisfaction; yet he would have scorned the idea that a mortal's prayers—even Virginie's—could be of any advantage.

The reading was too soon over, and the prisoners, in their hunger and discomfort, began, like wild beasts, uneasily pacing the space into which the cells opened. Rousselet found himself once more with Riouffe. He was a Girondin, he discovered, and had been in prison since the Girondin troubles.

'I have seen Vergniaud and Valazé, Gaudet and Brissot here,' said Riouffe. 'Ah, my friend, to hear those great men talk on their last evening! They went forth, and I felt as if my heart had gone too; but I am still here, watching the grim procession passing on to the guillotine. See!' he cried, as he pointed from the small window that overlooked the street in which stood the gate of the prison, 'from here we see them arrive. By-and-by you will know how they leave us. I am a solitary man, yet you cannot imagine how trying it has been to my nerves to be, as I have been, cooped up here for months, expecting death at any moment, and yet lingering on in dreadful expectation. I have been so sick of life, so weary of the continual adieux I have been constantly making these months past, that at times I have begged to be led to trial—I have openly abused the powers that be—but no—here I am as though I had been forgotten.'

Then Riouffe told Rousselet of the prison itself. There were three classes of prisoners. The most pitiable class were those without friends, who were therefore placed on the ground floor, on what were called the 'Souricières,' or mouse-traps.

'I was there placed myself,' said Riouffe, 'being friendless and alone. I had for my companions two malefactors of the worst kind. The stench, filth, and misery were terrible—the place swarmed with immense rats! The prisoners were never allowed out even for exercise. I felt I was going mad, and should have died there, had it not been for my good Valazé, who, in the midst of his own suffering, could still think of others. I was a stranger to him except by name, yet he never ceased demanding my liberation from this torment, till at last I was brought here. This is filthy enough, God knows; but it is luxury compared to the

"Souricières." Here we are *à la paille*. We at least are allowed to take exercise in the courtyard. We are all of us here for what are called political offences, and, even though we have the certainty that before long we shall cease to exist, while we are here we can enjoy the luxury of sympathy from beings as good as ourselves. The third category of prisoners are those who can afford to pay for their lodgings. The chief turnkey exacts a fee of twenty francs per month, and, as some only remain a few days, and their place is quickly supplied by others, and as none are allowed to pay for less than a month, M. le Beau makes a good thing of his place. These prisoners are said to be *à la pistole*.

The long morning wore on till at nine o'clock the door of the room was opened and the prisoners counted out. They were conducted to the courtyard of the prison. It was a damp, drizzling day. The occupants of the prison were therefore crowded into the slight shelter afforded by the corridors and passages around, which reeked with pestilential odours. There seemed hundreds of unfortunate beings so collected. Riouffe showed Rousselet a *grille* or iron grating on one side of this courtyard which communicated with the part of the prison given up to the women.

'It was there,' said he, 'we *détenus* used to crowd to listen, in rapt admiration, to the sublime talk of Citoyenne Roland. I have never heard anything so full of rhythm and poetry as her language. When she passed through after her condemnation, there was a look of beatified resignation on her face, as she indicated her sentence, that I shall never forget!'

About midday the prisoners, or *détenus* as they were called in the language of the prison, were summoned to the refectory for their only meal. They were fed in batches without order or method, and the scrambling and violence of the hungry wretches were so disgusting, that those—and there were many such—who had a sense of decency and justice, formed themselves voluntarily into a sort of police to enable the weak and infirm to have the daily pittance, which the gaolers took no trouble to distribute individually.

The prison fare was bad enough. Two dried herrings a day or some half-rotten salt cod, with a hunch of bread full of bran and straw, formed their diet, and the whole was washed down with a pint of what was called wine, a strange decoction of medicaments, in which the juice of the grape was entirely wanting.

After this doleful meal they were again conducted to the courtyard, where at about three in the afternoon the procession

of those condemned during the day passed through the ranks of the prisoners, ranged on either side in breathless anxiety. On the second day of his incarceration Rousselet saw Hébert, Momoro, Ronsin, Vincent, and Cloutz so pass. To most of those going to the guillotine was accorded many a sympathetic word. 'Adieu, my friend,' would sob many a heart-broken prisoner, as he pressed the hand of one going to his death; 'without doubt we shall shortly meet again.' Who could tell how shortly! But to these no hand was extended. Nineteen of them in all. These were would-be guillotiners, now to be guillotined in their turn! Sadly they passed along amid the silence of their fellow-prisoners. Deep sunk were their heads, Ronsin alone holding his aloft.

At nightfall the turnkeys with their huge dogs conducted the prisoners back to their cells. These men were generally drunk. Outside each room or ward the names of the prisoners were called out by one man, and each had to answer while another counted them as they entered. It often happened that the gaoler who read the names was so far gone as to read the wrong name. On no one answering the man would lose his temper and insist on all the prisoners turning out to be recounted. Sometimes in self-defence one of the prisoners had to read the names for the turnkey in order to make the number tally with the list. On all occasions the gaolers were most brutal and insulting to the *détenus*. It was only when they were finally locked up in their foul dens that the poor fellows felt at their ease, for then alone were they at liberty to talk and amuse themselves without being overheard. They were seldom disturbed from nightfall till nine o'clock in the morning.

So passed the days in the prison of the Conciergerie, only varied by the notification, at nine o'clock, that an unfortunate man's turn for trial had arrived, and at three by the procession of the condemned. Among the prisoners themselves there were many of the *noblesse*. Few of these however allowed their pride to separate them from those who were their fellow-prisoners. Rousselet, as he sadly mused over the downfall of his Republican dreams, did not fail to perceive that there was much good in his old enemies the aristocrats. He was astonished to find so many assembled here, and how nobly and silently they bore their sufferings. 'If half of this was known in Paris,' he mused,— 'if the majority of Frenchmen who now carelessly pass their lives in thinking only of themselves could see this prison for half a day, Robespierre would be hurled from his power, and the true

Republic founded.' The true Republic? Whose Republic? Never was there a 'Fata Morgana' more unreal than the Republic of poor Rousselet!

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TRIAL.

FOUR days after Rousselet's arrival there was a sensation among the prisoners. It was in the afternoon, when they were still in the refectory, or in the courtyard, that a new batch of *détenus* was introduced. What! was it possible? Here were Fabre d'Eglantine and Lacroix, Camille Desmoulins and Danton. The prisoners crowded round them with astonishment. Shut up from the world they did not know the march of events, and were unconscious of the quarrels and struggles that went on among the rulers of Paris. To them Danton was the arch-type of the revolutionary leader. The great controller of events! How now? Was he too 'suspect'? With head erect and huge shoulders thrown back he entered the hall, his great throat bare, and his brows knitted, looking, as David the painter once said (when he believed in him) like the Olympian Jove. All voices were silent at the sight of him.

'Messieurs,' he said with his tremendous voice, 'I hoped to have been the means of delivering you from this place, but here I am among you, and God only knows when this will end!'

He was conveyed to a solitary cell, the one Hébert had just vacated, wherefrom the prisoners heard him shouting, with many oaths and much obscenity, the tremendous thoughts that rose to his Titanic mind to Westermann in the next cell. Like Falstaff he 'babbled of green fields.' His one regret was that he should have been fool enough to be tricked by Robespierre. Camille Desmoulins was much cast down. He thought, poor fellow, of his loving wife, his Lucille, who was so shortly to follow him to the guillotine.

'What proves Robespierre a Nero,' they heard Danton growl, 'is that he had never talked of Camille Desmoulins with such affection as on the eve of his arrest.'

The two men had been at school together, and Maximilien had been one of the witnesses at Camille's marriage.

Rousselet was much affected by this new proscription. Where

was his Republic now? Verily the tale of heads was being quickly completed, and those of the staunchest Republicans were to be added to the number. Where would it end? He cared not to think. Like Danton himself, he felt weary and desired a finish.

He had not to wait. The day after the arrival of these 'moderates,' as they were called, at ten in the morning Rousselet heard his name called to appear before the Revolutionary Committee.

'So soon, my friend,' murmured Riouffe, taking his hand with affection.

But Rousselet started forward eagerly.

'At last!' he cried cheerfully.

It was two days after the arrest of Rousselet that Citizen Barrère came to Le Blanc's café. Le Blanc happened not to be in the room as Barrère appeared. He came forward with his usual gallant smile to salute the 'fair icicle' as he called Virginie.

'Citoyen Barrère,' she said in a low voice, 'I have a favour to ask you.'

'*Citoyenne*, consider it granted at once.'

Virginie fixed her great brown eyes on his face. Was it possible for him to save Rousselet she thought. As for the first time she carefully studied his clever yet shifty eyes, she thought she saw in him good-nature at least. Fond of pleasure she knew him to be. Of the dark points of his life she knew nothing. Instinctively she would have shrunk from him, but to whom else could she turn? Barrère, called the Anacreon of the Republic, the writer of all the flowery and lying reports current at the time, was indeed a broken reed to rely on. He would have done a good-natured act if in doing so he incurred no danger. It was for himself and of himself that he constantly thought. Virginie would have preferred consulting Carnot, but at that moment he was not in Paris.

'Citoyen Barrère,' she said, 'one of our friends, Charles Rousselet, has been arrested and is accused before the revolutionary tribunal. Can you do something for him?'

Barrère's smiling face clouded in a moment.

'My power is very limited. Assuredly I will make inquiries and do what I can for a friend of yours.'

'If you can,' said Virginie, 'I shall be greatly indebted to you.' And she gave her hand, which Barrère kissed.

But she noticed that he was very uneasy, and when his

dinner was finished would have escaped from the house without any further talk, but Virginie beckoned to him.

'At least,' she said, 'bring me news of him.'

'That I can promise,' answered he.

Four days passed before Barrère reappeared. When he came, he walked straight to Virginie.

'*Citoyenne*,' he said, 'the cause is hopeless!'

Virginie turned pale.

'He is to be tried to-morrow, and from the evidence to be brought against him there is no doubt as to the verdict.'

'And yet,' cried Virginie passionately, 'it is impossible he can have done anything against the Republic which he so greatly loved.'

'Ah,' answered Barrère, 'who knows in these days! One may be an excellent Republican and yet counter-revolutionary. So says Citoyen Robespierre, and I fear he is right.'

He caught sight of Virginie's face now flushed with a righteous indignation.

'*Citoyenne*,' he added in a low voice, 'be advised. Do not stir in this matter; it may concern you more than you think,' and he turned and walked away.

That evening Virginie told her father what she had done, and what she had heard from Barrère. Poor Jacques was dreadfully alarmed, and when Virginie announced her determination of attending the trial next day his terror became so great that he shed tears in his efforts to dissuade her.

'My child,' he cried, 'just consider! It is not thou alone but thy son and husband who are concerned. Monsieur left me to guard thee. What use am I if thou doest this thing? Rousselet himself tells thee not to involve thyself in his ruin. And he knew best, the good fellow! Where shall I ever find such a friend?'

'In my great trouble M. Rousselet stood by my husband. Shall I not be there when I am wanted? Let him at least see that I take an interest in his fate, and that he dies, if die he must, not unthought of or uncared for.'

'But, my child——' urged Jacques.

'Father,' interrupted Virginie, 'it is no use trying to dissuade me. There is no danger. They will not know on whose account we are there. Many more will be tried and condemned besides our poor friend.'

And so Virginie carried the day.

Next morning she and her father sallied forth early to the

Palais de Justice, and took their place in a corner of the hall where prisoners were tried. All through the morning they were there; Jacques excited and by turns pale and flushed, Virginie seemingly unmoved. They saw some ten prisoners, among whom were three women, tried and condemned before it came to poor Rousselet's turn. Around them were a crowd of exulting *sans-culottes*, who laughed and jeered at the incidents of the different trials and invariably applauded each condemnation.

'Goes it not merrily?' cried a woman sitting next to Virginie. 'We shall have a fine *fournée* to-day!'

The woman was not ill-looking. She might have passed for a common everyday decent woman of the people. Virginie answered nothing, but Jacques with the readiness of his profession replied:

'Not fast enough, not fast enough.'

Yet was he in a state of pitiable agitation.

Virginie recalled to herself—she had been thinking, poor soul, of her husband, and how she should certainly have had to undergo the torture of seeing him arraigned before the tribunal had he remained in Paris—joined in the conversation.

'It is a pity,' she said, 'that all traitors cannot be at once swept away.' Her voice sounded hard and dry, and quite unlike her usual tone.

'Not at all,' answered the woman. 'One likes to prolong one's pleasure, not have it all over in a minute.'

'Like relishing a good dish,' cried Jacques, making a queer grimace in trying to force a smile.

'Fouquier Tinville is the cook of my heart,' cried the woman. '*Aristocrates à la minute* he serves us.'

'Surely too much monotony is bad,' observed Virginie. At that minute Rousselet was brought into court. She became quite absorbed in the proceedings, and turning to her neighbour she said:—

'*Citoyenne*, I am new to the court and the proceedings interest me greatly. May I request you to allow me to listen to what *Citoyen Tinville* says.'

Rousselet's appearance was not altered in the slightest degree. His dress was as scrupulously neat, his manner as calm, as though he were come for his amusement. He listened to the commencement of his accusation with a smile. So careless had he been to preserve his life that he had never cared to inquire of what he was accused! It was, then, a surprise to him to hear Fouquier Tinville read his act of arrestation. He found himself accused of counter-

revolution, of having defended and taken the part of Marie Antoinette, of having been the agent of Pitt and the *émigrés*, of having procured the liberation of aristocrat traitors, notably on the days of September, when he was seen in the prison of the Abbaye, and was instrumental in freeing many men who were now in arms against the nation.

On hearing this Rousselet for the first time grew pale with terror. It was not for himself but for Virginie!

According to the rules of the court a legal defender had been appointed. When this man rose to defend him Rousselet politely stopped him.

'*Citoyen*,' he said, in a firm voice, 'spare your words. Nothing you can say could convince that jury that I had not received bribes, that I had not plotted against my country, that I was not an agent of M. Pitt. It is sufficient for me to know that I am innocent. To render matters more easy for them I will plead guilty to having designed to take away from them their means of vengeance. I am for mercy. I desire no more political proscriptions. I am against tyranny from which we are suffering now-days; the tyranny of the Ten I utterly condemn. I have done my duty; it is for you, *citoyens*, to do what you think to be yours!'

'This is madness!' cried the advocate; 'the *citoyen* is clearly not in his right mind.'

'Never,' answered Rousselet, 'have I my head more under my command than now that I am on the point of losing it. I forbid you, *citoyen* advocate, to defend me. Let me be taken to the guillotine.'

There were some murmurs at this strange speech, at which Rousselet cast his eyes round the hall of justice. He saw many who made it a point to attend as they would have attended a first night at the theatre. To them this utter disregard of life was new and, it must be owned, they enjoyed the sense of novelty. Denunciation and recrimination they had often witnessed but never such indifference to life! But in the corner of the room with their backs to the light Rousselet had caught sight of two persons. Pale and tearless there sat Virginie, and by her side was Jacques, his face blanched with terror!

Not long did the tribunal deliberate. If this man were to escape how could they sit any more? Clearly this was a hardened traitor! 'Death that day,' they decreed,

Rousselet bowed.

'Citoyens,' he cried, 'I thank you. You have for once given a verdict for mercy. I have no wish to live now the Republic has ceased to be free.'

His guards led him back to prison, to prepare him for the 'Sainte Guillotine.'

Virginie watched the trial with intense interest. She seemed to read in Rousselet's conduct all his noble generosity. She understood the motive that prompted him to plead guilty. It was in her cause he died, to shield her he refused to answer his accusers! She knew he had caught sight of her.

'There,' cried her neighbour, 'that's what I call a brave fellow! It will be a pleasure to see him mount the guillotine this afternoon! Dost thou know him, my dear?'

'I—I have seen him in our section,' said Virginie in a low voice.

Then sentence of the jury was delivered.

'Death that day.'

The words seemed to burn themselves into Virginie's heart. Death—the end of all things—and for her!

When Rousselet had been led away, Jacques started up in his agitation.

'Come, my child, let us go home,' he muttered.

'Not so, father,' answered Virginie in a low voice. 'Let us wait another trial. It will be safer,' she whispered in Jacques's ear.

In truth she could not at that moment have left the court. She heard not a word of the trial of the next poor wretch who was condemned. Death seemed all around her. It seemed to enter her being, it threatened all she loved. While he was being tried, she was tormented by the idea she ought to endeavour to see this friend who had done so much for her and hers, to comfort him in this his trouble. At least to tell him *she* knew for whom he died! But then what could she do? Had not Rousselet himself told her that to aid or sympathise with a 'suspect' was to make yourself 'suspect'? Should she not be bringing destruction and denunciation on herself, on her father, her husband, and possibly her child? No! if it were only herself—but to ruin all these! So when the trial was over, and another added to the *fournée*, while the woman next to her was chuckling with delight, she rose and, taking her father's arm, left the room with a firm step. As she passed her neighbour the woman cried:—

'Do not forget this afternoon, it will be a splendid *fournée* Citoyen Tinville gives us this day.'

‘I shall not forget,’ answered Virginie, in a low voice.

Jacques was so moved he could say nothing ; indeed, Virginie had to guide him, for his eyes were too full to see the way, in spite of the free use he made of his enormous pocket-handkerchief, which indeed was quite wet with his tears. But, when they were well in the street, the daughter’s strength began to fail, and it was the father that had to give support and guidance. The crowd round the hall made way for them. Many whispered, ‘They have lost someone.’ Some few muttered words of threat against sympathisers with traitors, but on the whole there was more pity shown than otherwise, and luckily Jacques, finding a coach, managed to take Virginie home safely.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE ‘HOLY GUILLOTINE.’

MEANWHILE Rousselet was conducted back to his prison. He entered with a brisk step, with head erect, and a smile on his hard features. There Riouffe met him.

‘Ah ! my friend, you are a brave man !’ he cried, and embraced him.

‘What have I to be afraid of ? What is the guillotine but a fillip on the neck ? How much better ending thus than being tried and tortured by a wasting disease or dying of hideous and painful wounds ?’

‘My friend,’ said Riouffe kindly, ‘have you none you are sorry to leave ?’

‘None,’ answered Rousselet roughly, but he turned his head away as he spoke. Then after a pause he added, looking at Riouffe—‘Unless Monsieur Riouffe allows me to say how much I have valued his friendship during these last few days.’

He spoke very softly and hesitatingly. He was not used to demonstrative affection. Never had he been drawn to any man as he was to this one, and he would have been glad to express himself with more warmth, but his lips were unused to the language of the heart. Riouffe’s bright eyes dimmed with tears.

‘It is an honour for me to be sought in friendship by so noble a man. Tell me,’ and here he placed his hand affectionately on

Rousselet's shoulder, 'should I by any accident be freed from this prison—I say not that I shall, I can hardly hope it, but should I escape death—is there nothing I could do for you? No one to whom I could convey your last words?'

Rousselet turned away and was silent.

'I seek not to probe your heart, or extort your confidence, my friend,' said Riouffe.

Rousselet turned suddenly. His face was livid, his lips seemed dry and incapable of speaking, though they moved as though to speak. Riouffe placed his ear close to his mouth.

'Seek,' whispered Rousselet, 'the daughter of Jacques le Blanc, Café de la Grande Nation, and say to her——'

'Well?' asked Riouffe.

But Rousselet said no more.

'My friend,' said Riouffe, 'I understand. I will tell her how you died, and how you thought of her. What more could be said? Is it not so?' and he pressed the hand of his friend. So they sat a short space, when Riouffe rose and left him.

So the end was come! He felt a grim joy it should be so: an end to all his cares, to his aspirations, and to his disappointments. What had he to regret? No one would miss him. Yes; he was sure *she* would grieve for him. Now he was gone she would regret him; had he lived, she would have been distantly polite and friendly. It was better to die and have her affectionate regrets. Perhaps she would teach her child to pray 'God keep Rousselet too.' She and Célimène. Alas! how far they seemed away already! Was it possible he might in some ethereal shape see her—watch over her—perchance without sin touch her unconscious lips? 'The old fetish,' he cried bitterly to himself. 'It cannot be true.' The only thing true was that he was to die, the only thing of which he felt convinced was that it was well he should. He thought not of his beloved Republic during these terrible moments. All his thoughts were of her. It was only when he heard his name called and knew the moment was come that he thought of his second love. With a proud toss of his head he started to his feet and firmly stepped forth. In the distance he heard the great voice of Danton hurling forth from his cell the ominous words:—

'They are all my brothers Cain. Brissot would have guillotined me as Robespierre does.'

'How much better to be a poor fisherman than to govern men!'

'This was his Republic,' thought Rousselet. 'No! better to die, much better!'

Many hands were extended to him, as he passed down the rank of assembled *détenus*. Many kinds words were spoken. There at least he was sure of sympathy. What would it be with the People for whom he had worked? whose justice he had vaunted?

Last of all Riouffe embraced him once more and whispered, 'I shall remember.'

Then forth he went to the antechamber, where what was called the 'toilette of the condemned' was performed. It was the fashion then to wear the hair long and gathered into a 'cue' or pigtail. The attendant turnkeys cut this off with scissors, and pinioned his arms. Then he mounted a tumbril, where there were already eight or ten persons, two of them women of high rank. Proudly he gazed at his companions. Some were quite cast down, some wept silently; one alone, the next one to him, a marquise, a lady of some sixty years old, appeared resigned. Her lips moved in prayer, but she sat tearless and silent.

'I ask pardon,' said Rousselet, 'if I incommode madame.'

'Monsieur,' answered she with a smile, 'we two at least will know how to die.'

Rousselet bowed. 'Madame,' he said, 'it is sometimes easier to die than to live.'

'Ah, monsieur, if you have lost all you love, to die is easy enough.'

The tumbrils started with much noise and jolting. Over the Seine, shining in the golden light of the afternoon sun (the river ran by Sèvres, too, thought Rousselet), past the Hôtel de Ville and the Palais Royal, now called the Palais Egalité, and then along the Rue St. Honoré. There was not a great crowd in the streets, but at some spots there was a gathering of people waiting to see the *fournée* of the day pass. Sometimes it happened that some unfortunate occupant of the tumbril was recognised, and sometimes someone in the crowd, generally a woman, would utter some cry of emotion or sympathy. Rousselet noticed when this happened that those near instantly stepped in front, and hid the person who so compromised herself from the eyes of the guards who accompanied the tumbrils on horseback. These laughed and chatted, as they clanked along with sabres drawn. The streets looked just as they had always looked; the sun glinted across as they passed an opening looking west. Everything was un-

changed. It seemed odd to think of leaving all this, never to be seen again.

Passing down the Rue St. Honoré, Rousselet felt something falling lightly round him. They were spring flowers, the same he had placed in his Sèvres vase the day that Virginie arrived at the Couronne d'Or. That was in March too. He looked up. They were passing an uninhabited house, one of those recently claimed by the Nation, its owner having been guillotined. The shutters were tight shut, all but one! from that he saw a white hand appear. It was hers. It was she had thrown the flowers! He should not be forgotten. He dared not look again at the window, for fear of arousing suspicion. He looked down on the flowers. They strewn the floor of the rough cart.

'*Mon ami*,' he said to the driver next to whom he was sitting, 'my hands are tied, yet would I like some of these flowers some kind soul has bestowed on us. Will you have the goodness to give me one in my hand?'

'*Sacré bleu!* thou art a droll!' laughed the driver. 'What use can flowers be to one like you?'

'It is a fancy.'

'Well! that as well as another,' and he stooped and picked up several. Some he placed in Rousselet's hands, with others he decked the front of his waistcoat.

'There! thou lookest as if going to a wedding, and, in truth, thou wilt soon be embraced by the Sainte Guillotine!' and he laughed boisterously, and shouted his joke to the gendarmes who were near, and they laughed too.

But the scent of these flowers was an inexpressible joy to poor Rousselet, recalling to him all he loved most. Who has not had brought back to him by a flower some long-lost friend? Who has not saddened in the midst of the joys of spring at the recollection of those to whom spring is not any change of seasons? Rousselet's joy had nothing of sadness in it. Virginie had thought of him, little Jacques would pray for him, and the two women would, that night at least, weep for one who was lying stiff and cold—a thing of nothing.

The cart slackened its pace. They were passing the well-known furniture shop at the corner of the Rue St. Florestin and the Rue St. Honoré over which dwelt Maximilien Robespierre. And at the window, in his eternal blue coat, stood Robespierre himself, with a smile on his thin lips. He was talking to a rather plain-looking woman, the daughter of his host, to whom some said

he was engaged to be married. He cast his eyes indolently down the street, on to the poor wretches he had condemned. Suddenly he recognised Rousselet, and the smile died on his lips. It was Rousselet who smiled now.

‘Adieu, Monsieur le Guillotineur, or rather à *bientôt*!’ cried Rousselet. It was all the revenge he could take. He felt no anger against the man. Was it not ordained for him to die? He felt happy at the prospect. And Robespierre noted his gay expression, and with a frown left the window.

As they passed the end of the street in which Jacques le Blanc lived, Rousselet looked wistfully toward the house. The street was deserted.

On, ever on, went the tumbrils, till the Place de la Révolution opened before them. There, one by one, beneath the dread shadow of the engine of death, each gave up its living burden. We will not linger o’er the scene. Rousselet’s turn came soon enough. With a bold, quick step he mounted—and all was over.

That evening, when the wretches whose duty it was to convey away the mangled remains of those who had but a few hours before been thinking, feeling, living, human creatures, were tossing the bodies into their carts, they paused at one slight form.

‘F——, he has something in his hands, this one,’ cried one.

‘Some valuable?’ cried another; ‘M. l’Avare, surrender your treasure.’

With difficulty they opened the tightly-clenched fists, and found—some crushed yellow flowers.

‘There goes one who has regretted the spring season,’ laughed the younger wretch, as he tossed the body into his cart.

Regretted? Not he. Of the thousands who were guillotined during that mad time, not one died more gladly than the solitary, seemingly morose man who was known as Charles Rousselet.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE TERROR.

A FEW days after the death of Rousselet, Virginie, one afternoon, was standing at the door of the café dreamily watching the April sun, as it shone down the street across the Garden of the Tuileries, which, clad in its happy spring foliage, looked bright and peaceful as though mankind was happy and peaceful too. She was think-

ing as usual of La Beauce away at the wars. 'God shield him!' she thought. 'The bullets of the Austrians have more mercy than the decrees of his countrymen,' when a woman's voice accosted her.

'Good day, *citoyenne*!' it cried; 'comest thou to the goodly show they offer us this afternoon?'

Virginie turned; it was the woman who had sat next to her at Rousselet's trial. She was a comely woman, evidently of the lower class. Though rather careworn, and somewhat slatternly, there was nothing to show inordinate ferocity, no sign of the craving for blood, her unfailing attendance at the execution would imply.

'Thank you,' answered Virginie, 'I cannot spare time to-day.'

'It is a pity,' said the other; 'there is to-day a magnificent *fournée*,—Camille Desmoulins and Danton among them! It will be a fine sight to see the head of Danton fall!'

'What has he done that his brother revolutionists should kill him?'

'What! hast thou not heard? Plotted counter-revolution, been in league with our enemies, wished to be prime minister to the new king!'

Virginie turned wearily away. How often had like accusations been brought? Could it be always true? Alas! in Rousselet's case it was clearly unjust. Might not these two be innocent?

'I take no delight in such sights,' she said sadly, turning towards the door of the café. 'They are surely not fit for women.'

'There was a time, *citoyenne*, when I thought as thou dost. But my man has gone to the wars, and I like to see those die who plot for the men against whom he fights.'

Virginie looked back. This woman had a husband, this woman so sated with the terrors of the guillotine could love!

'My husband is also in Belgium with the army,' she said; 'but I stay at home and pray for his safety.'

'Pray, *citoyenne*? who prays nowadays? Such things are past. To each his own taste. I almost fancy I am with my husband when I see the blood of his enemies spurt up from the blade of the holy guillotine. Adieu, *citoyenne*! I shall be too late for a good place.' Away she hurried towards the Place de la Révolution, where that day the Dantonists, as they were called, were to die, even as they had seen the Girondins die.

Virginie had hitherto succeeded in keeping her thoughts from the terrors she knew were all around. She was aware the *fournée*

each day passed along the Rue St. Honoré at the end of her street. Had she not seen poor Rousselet pass that way? But she had carefully abstained from witnessing any more of these sad processions, or even looking in that direction. Now she involuntarily turned her eyes towards the Rue St. Honoré. People had got so accustomed to the sight of the tumbrils, that on ordinary occasions there was to be found no crowd in the street. But when Danton was to die the old interest revived, and there was a considerable crowd assembled. A morbid desire to see these men again came over Virginie too. She quickly put on her hat and ran to the end of the street, just in time. There were several tumbrils full of men, who passed unnoticed. The tumbril with Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Hérault de Séchelles was the last. Camille, white with emotion, with foam on his lips, with his coat and shirt torn by his exertions, notwithstanding that his arms were tied behind him, had been haranguing the crowd. At the yells they raised he sunk back, his bright eyes glazed and bleared. 'Oh, my Lucille!' she heard him murmur as he passed. Danton held his head aloft and glared around. 'Take no notice of this vile rabble,' she heard him growl. Virginie noticed that while a small crowd followed the tumbril, and hooted poor Camille down, the lookers on received the sad cavalcade in silence. Many there were, besides herself, who attributed to this Danton the evil doings of September. Curiosity led them to witness the great tribune brought low. Yet why was it so? He had been on the side of mercy!

Virginie sadly returned home. She had liked this Camille, having often seen him dining with his wife at the café. He was so bright and loving. And Lucille, where was she? As she sat at her accustomed place, she glanced at the table where these two had so often dined. Alas, it was empty now! By this time Camille's voice was stilled for ever!

As the afternoon passed on, thoughts of poor Lucille came upon her—Lucille left alone with the little Horace! Might not that have been her fate? Could she do nothing for her? It was a slack day at the café. She would go and try to comfort this poor woman, who had so often asked her to visit her. Telling her father she was going for a walk, she slipped out, and made her way to the well-remembered address. On asking the *concierge* for Citoyenne Desmoulins, that woman shrugged her shoulders.

'*Mon Dieu, citoyenne!*' answered the woman, angrily, 'doth not everybody know she is wanted by the Revolutionary Committee?'

Virginie shrunk back. Arrested? Was she to follow Camille so soon? Alas, yes, and with joy!

After this a morbid fancy came upon her to know who were to be guillotined each day. It was not difficult to ascertain; the journals all published the list, placing it immediately after the *affiches* of the theatres. Here Virginie now daily read the names to see whether there were any she knew among them. Impelled by a terrible fascination, she even went each day to the door of the café, at about the hour the *fournée* passed, and looked up the street towards the Rue St. Honoré, when she could just catch sight of their heads, as they drove by on their way to execution. So it happened she often saw her acquaintance the *citoyenne*, who regularly passed her door, taking a short cut to secure a good place at the daily execution. Each day they exchanged a few words.

'Have you good news from the army, *citoyenne*?'

'Excellent, and you?'

'Oh, my man never writes! He knows I cannot read,' and she would hurry on.

One day Virginie could not help asking this woman how she could bring herself to frequent the Place de la Révolution with its terrors?

'Ah! *citoyenne*,' answered she, 'it is not all so dreadful. Yesterday there was a *petite fournée*, Fouquier Tinville had been less diligent than usual, and there were to be few to "sneeze in the sack." Well, I never laughed so much in my life! The procession was late, and Citoyen Samson had all ready waiting, so the crowd began to grow impatient, when one of the assistants took upon himself to dance on the scaffold of the machine itself. *Mon Dieu!* how droll he was!' and she laughed at the recollection.

'But the horror of the execution, the blood!' shuddered Virginie.

'There thou deceivest thyself, *citoyenne*,' answered the woman. 'These dogs of aristocrats die with the greatest courage. Yesterday there was a little chicken of sixteen or seventeen years, fresh as a rose, who mounted the steps as gaily as she would have threaded the figures of a dance. And as for blood,' added the woman, 'we see but little of that.'

'Yet,' cried Virginie, indignantly, 'these are our fellow men and women, each with his or her dear ones, each regretted and wept for by father, brother, mother, sister, wife or husband.'

'It is possible,' answered the woman. 'They are all the same

aristocrats, who, we are told, are plotting against our lives; for if they returned to power they would do the same to us. *Citoyenne*,' she added, looking round her first to see that no one was within hearing, 'thou and I cannot afford to let it be thought we sympathise with them, so we must do as the rest.'

Virginie grew pale. 'I sympathise not with traitors,' she said, in a low voice, 'but traitors are after all human creatures. If I would not willingly destroy one of God's creatures, how could I bring myself to witness the destruction of my fellows?'

The woman laughed nervously. 'I go not for pleasure,' she said apologetically. 'I go lest suspicion should come to me from staying away. Who could suspect a *tricoteuse*? I am not an aristocrat, I cannot look death in the face without trembling. Adieu, *citoyenne*, I am already late; see, the *fournée* passes!' And away she hurried; but she returned after running a few yards, and, coming close to Virginie, whispered:—

'Think not ill of me, *citoyenne*. Thou art right, but what can I do?'

So passed the month of May. The terror of the Revolution began to tell even on the Café de la Grande Nation. Few people came there now, and when they did come it was singly. Friends met and hardly dared recognise each other. No one was safe against treachery, and to know a 'suspect' was thought enough to condemn a friend.

On June 2 the guillotine was removed from its old place in the Place de la Révolution to the Place St. Antoine. Virginie felt a great sensation of relief. It was as though she had wakened from a nightmare.

CHAPTER XLVII.

ANNETTE'S HUSBAND.

A FEW days after, the *citoyenne* of the trial came to the door of the café and inquired for madame. On seeing Virginie she burst into tears.

'Ah, *citoyenne*,' she sobbed, 'he has come back, my man! Wounded and sick, nearly dying, and I can do nothing for him. How can a poor woman nourish one so ill on the bread of the section? And the section will do nothing for its brave soldiers.'

Through her tears the woman pleaded volubly. Virginie was touched. Was her husband not a soldier?

'What can I do for you?' she asked.

'For the love of God!' cried the woman, relapsing into her old way of talking in her emotion, 'give me some *bouillon* and some white bread.'

Virginie went into the kitchen and brought what was required.

'See,' she said kindly, 'my husband is a soldier too. For his sake I do this for thee.'

The woman was profuse in her thanks.

'Ah, madame! If there is anything I can do for thee, remember Mère Annette.'

Each day the Mère Annette came for her *bouillon* and her bread, for the cafés of Paris had still luxuries for those who could pay for them, and Jacques could purchase good meat and flour while the people starved on the regulation bread full of husks and straw.

After a time the Mère Annette gave a better account of her man. Yet, as her husband grew better, she became more careworn and slatternly. Virginie, noticing this, asked after her own health. The poor woman burst into tears.

'Ah, madame,' she said, 'he is so ill-tempered since he has been ill. And then at all times I must work, for he will have money, and how is it to be got these bad times? It is his illness, poor soul! Such a man as he is, quite a *grand seigneur*! Excuse me,' she added, looking round in fear lest anyone should have overheard what she said, 'I do not mean that.'

Virginie grew to pity this woman. No longer could she find time to attend the terrible exhibition furnished each day by the Revolutionary Committee. No longer did she joke about those who were 'to sneeze in the sack,' or 'be shaved by the national razor.' The poor thing seemed humbled by her love, ground down by labour, and the life taken out of her. Each day, as she came for her dole, she confided more and more in Virginie. She was proud of her 'man'; he was a gentleman, for whom she was ready to slave. What was she that she should complain? But times were very hard and money was not easily come at. 'See, madame, a man is not easily convinced, and my *Capitaine* is accustomed to the best of everything.'

'Does he treat you kindly?' asked Virginie.

'I do not complain, madame,' said the poor woman proudly.

So ill and careworn did the Mère Annette get, that at length Virginie determined to see her husband. She was certain if she talked to him she might persuade him to be kinder to his wife. She had more than once undertaken a like office while she was at the Château de la Beauce, and always with success. Poor woman, she forgot that she then spoke with authority! What was she in Paris? Nobody. She could only speak the language of reason and humanity, she could only plead as one woman for another. She did not consider this in her confidence in herself, a confidence the result of the adulation and admiration with which she had been always surrounded.

So one day she proposed to the Mère Annette to return with her, and see how her invalid progressed. Annette was staggered at the proposition.

'See you, madame,' she said, 'my man will, no doubt, be overjoyed to receive such a visit; but not to-day. Let me prepare to receive madame. We are poor and the *Capitaine* is proud.'

The next day, however, Annette came with a smiling face. 'The *Capitaine* was much better, and would be glad to do the honours of his poor lodging. He begged madame to excuse the poverty of his house. His absence and long illness had brought him to a state of indigence to which he had not been accustomed.'

Such was the message, evidently carefully got by heart, that Annette brought Virginie, who at once got ready to accompany her humble friend.

She was dressed in grey, and took the precaution to place round her head the simple red handkerchief then commonly worn by the women of Paris, from whom she could not be distinguished but from her air of neatness, and a certain dignity which was part of her being. So clad, she started with Annette on her mission of mercy.

The streets of Paris were at that time a curious sight. Over each window and door (and Jacques you may be sure had not forgotten to decorate his) floated a tricolor flag, and most people, lest they should be thought wanting in 'civism' had surmounted the staff that bore the flag with a red cap of liberty. Numerous placards were also displayed bearing the inscription 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' to which some had added 'or Death.' Even the window-sills were wreathed with woollen cloths of the three colours. The Rue St. Honoré down which the two women made

their way was particularly decorated. As they, walking on the other side of the road, passed the well-known furniture shop where dwelt Robespierre, Virginie glanced at the windows of his lodging. Above them there was quite a cluster of tricolor flags, crowned with laurel wreaths. At the door lounged many fierce-looking men, Robespierre's volunteer guard, each with a stout stick in his hand on which was a formidable knob. They were nicknamed 'Tappedures,' and always accompanied their master to save him from the daggers of his enemies.

Most of the shops which lined what was then one of the principal streets of Paris were shut. Those few which continued open displayed the poorest assortment of goods. It was not well in those days to make a show of wealth. The very names of the streets were changed. The Rue de Richelieu was called the Rue de la Loi. Other well-known streets were called 'd'Helvetius,' 'de Marat,' &c. They made their way to the houses at the back of the Palais Royal, now called Palais Egalité, where at length before a tall and very dilapidated tenement the Mère Annette stopped.

'I ask pardon,' she said, 'for bringing madame to such a poor house. Madame will have a care.'

Virginie entered. The stairs were indeed dark and far from clean. A sickly odour filled the place. They passed several doors as they mounted upwards. From one there came hoarse drunken cries, from another the sobs of a child. One man clad in full *carmagnole* they passed.

'Whom hast thou here, Mère Annette?' he asked rudely.

'A friend of "my man's,"' she answered.

'Thou art a fool to bring so dainty a morsel in his way,' said the man with an odious leer.

Virginie trembled and hurried on. At length on the fifth floor Annette paused.

'Have no fear,' she whispered; 'my *Capitaine* is a man of honour.'

'Is it thou, Annette?' cried a voice within. 'Enter in the name of all *sans-culottic* saints.'

Annette opened the door and they entered. The room was tidy and evidently recently scrubbed out, but there was the trace of the Mère Annette's ordinary occupation in the heavy dampness of the atmosphere. For Annette was a washerwoman—a *blanchisseuse de fin*. By the window was an ironing board, on which was some linen, very fine and delicate, waiting to be ironed.

In the corner of the room was a not over-clean bed, which had evidently lately been used. Over the stove on a shelf were several bottles, while the smell of stale tobacco rendered the damp atmosphere doubly oppressive.

By the side of the stove, which was lighted—though it was midsummer—was her husband sitting in one chair with his legs on another.

‘Well,’ he cried, ‘hast thou brought thy dainty friend?’

‘*Chut!*’ answered Annette, in a low, pleading voice; ‘she is here.’

Virginie, who had hung back for a moment from a motive of delicacy, entered the room.

The husband hastily withdrew his legs and struggled to his feet, holding by the chair. His features became set with an eager look. His eye—he had only one—positively glittered with emotion. It was Capitaine Pinard!

‘Pardon, madame,’ he said, ‘I was unaware of the honour being done to my humble abode. It is long since beauty has graced my sight.’

‘I am glad,’ said Virginie, ‘to see you have so far recovered. We can ill spare the soldiers who have so bravely defended our frontier against the enemy.’

Pinard’s eye, which had been fixed on Virginie, glanced once uneasily at Annette, then back to Virginie.

‘My friend Annette has told me you were a soldier. For all such I have a sympathy, for my husband is also serving his country.’

‘Ah!’ said Pinard quickly, ‘the husband of madame is with the army. May I be bold enough to ask his name? Excuse me, my wife is such a fool, she has never ascertained the name of madame herself.’

‘My husband is Colonel Chardon,’ said Virginie. It did great credit to Pinard’s powers of self-control that he did not at once explode with wrath. He could not entirely suppress all his feelings.

‘Do you know him?’ asked Virginie.

‘Know Colonel Chardon?’ answered Pinard slowly. ‘Who does not know him who has served with the army of the north? Ah! you are Madame Chardon! I fancied I recognised one I had seen before. Did not madame live once in Sèvres?’

‘Yes, at the Couronne d’Or.’

‘I was not deceived then! Ah! in happier days I spent many

hours there on my way to and from Versailles. And my friend Le Blanc, is he in Paris ?'

Such eagerness appeared in the eye of Pinard that Virginie grew quite uncomfortable.

'Yes,' she answered, 'I am living with my father.'

'Capital !' cried Pinard, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

'You knew him too ?'

'You see, madame, I was not always fallen so low. The Revolution has brought many down. Has it not, madame ?'

Here Pinard leered at Virginie with so knowing a look, that she began to wish she had not given way to her good-natured impulses.

Pinard placed a chair for his visitor.

'Will madame condescend to sit ?'

Unable to refuse, Virginie sunk into a chair. Annette had returned to her ironing.

'We cannot afford to waste our time,' she said; 'Citoyen Robespierre is very particular about his linen.'

'Ah, madame!' quoth Pinard, 'to think it should have come to this! My wife washing the linen of M. Robespierre!'

'And thankful enough to get the job,' cried Annette. 'In these days when it is the fashion to wear dirty linen or none at all, there is but little work to be procured.'

'Hold thy tongue, idiot!' cried Pinard.

'And thou, too, art glad of M. Robespierre's money.'

'My wife,' said the husband, speaking with slow emphasis, 'I have desired thee to be silent.'

Annette grew red as she glanced at her husband, but she wisely continued her ironing in silence. There was an awkward pause.

'I have come,' said Virginie, 'partly to see how you were getting on, and whether I could be of any further service to you.' Pinard bowed. 'And partly to point out to you that Annette herself seems far from well.'

'It is very good of you to have come on such an errand,' answered Pinard. 'Your heart, madame, is easily touched. It is the privilege of beauty, and if we were not in the year III. of our beautiful Republic I should say rank'—here Pinard leered and bowed again—'to take an interest in so humble a *ménage*.'

'I assure you,' said Virginie, 'I had no other motive than a desire to be of use to a brother-soldier of my husband's.'

Pinard seemed to stiffen himself.

'The brother-soldier is grateful. Yes, if madame would send me a bottle or two of Maître le Blanc's excellent wine, it might the quicker enable me to resume my duty to my country.'

'And Annette?' asked Virginie.

'Annette? Woman,' said Pinard, turning to his wife, 'art thou ill? Dost thou complain? Speak before madame, who takes such a tender interest in thy welfare.' There was a sneer in the voice of the man that made Virginie feel unaccountably frightened.

'I am well,' said Annette stoutly; 'I have never complained.'

'Thou dost well to speak the truth.'

'Yet,' said Virginie, 'I have noticed she is much changed, that she looks pale and ill, and seems to require rest.'

Pinard, who had been looking down and smiling at some inward fancy which seemed to tickle him, here raised his eye and stared at his visitor. 'Madame,' he said, interrupting, 'you must allow me to say that here we are in Paris, and not under the old *régime*. The woman is well; has madame not heard her say so?'

Virginie began to be really alarmed. Did this man know who she really was? Was it possible that he was aware that the daughter of the innkeeper of Sèvres had married a noble?

'Well, I am glad to see that you are so much better,' said she, and she rose to go. 'Annette knows where to find me if she requires anything that I can give her.'

'Be assured Annette will not forget where to find madame.'

'And the wine shall be ready for you to-morrow when she calls,' answered Virginie, as she moved to the door.

Annette put down her work and was hastening to show Virginie out, when Pinard started up:

'Go on with thy work, woman,' he cried sternly; 'allow me to show madame the way,' he added with forced politeness. With more activity than he looked to possess he hurried to the door, which he opened with a sinister smile. 'Madame will, I hope, excuse me; I fear my strength will not enable me to show her the civility due to her exalted rank, and I must with regret allow her to descend without escort.' Here he bowed, still holding the handle of the door.

'Pray do not trouble yourself, I am accustomed to find my own way,' answered Virginie, as, with a bow of acknowledgment, she turned to descend the stairs. She had not got to the first landing when she heard the door slam, and a peal of ill-omened laughter follow. She fled frightened downwards, and was relieved

to find herself in the street. As she sped homewards she bitterly blamed herself for having yielded to her charitable impulse.

Pinard, having slammed the door with a loud laugh, made his way back to his chair, and, throwing himself into it, fairly shook with laughter. His wife watched him with amazement.

'What hast thou?' she asked.

But he paid no attention, and continued his hoarse laugh. She came to his side and placed her hand on his arm. Suddenly he stopped, and seized her by the arm.

'Thou art ill, art thou? Madame is unquiet about thee! Thou hast friends among the aristocrats, yet thou dost wash the linen of the incorruptible Robespierre. I have half a mind to denounce thee.'

Poor Annette fell on her knees before Pinard.

'Oh, what have I done?' she cried. 'Oh, Gabriel, spare me!'

Pinard scowled at her and twisted his moustache. 'Listen,' said he, holding up a warning finger; 'if thou sayest a word to thy fine friend about me, if thou venturdest to do anything but what I order thee, that moment thou art lost. Thou knowest me, woman; I am a man of my word when I threaten. Now go back to thy work, and see thou workest quickly.'

The woman, cowed and humble, returned to her ironing, while Pinard, having brought down a bottle from the shelf above the stove and poured out a stiff glass of its contents, which he placed within reach, sat himself down in his chair and pondered. After a time he produced his pipe, and slowly lit it, still deep in thought, and as he puffed out the smoke dexterously into the shape of rings, he made passes through them with the stem of his pipe and smiled.

His wife continued her work, from time to time glancing uneasily at her husband.

Pinard had married this woman when she was a good-looking girl. She had been taken by his swagger and soft words, and believed that in marrying a gentleman she was doing a grand thing; but from that day she had been his drudge. It was useful to a man in Pinard's line of business to have a quiet home to which he could retire and lie hid for a time; it was, above all, advantageous to him to be able to lay his hands on his wife's savings when he himself was without means. So for years the woman had slaved and the man spent her earnings. But the strange part of the story was that, in spite of ill-usage and even

blows, the woman still believed in her husband! And if her feelings could be analysed, if the odd and incomprehensible motives that regulated the life of this simple creature could be fathomed, it would have been found that her fixed idea was that this man was a gentleman! Had he been of her own class she would have resented his conduct, but by what rule could she judge a man who was so much above her? Belief is a matter of sentiment after all; by the laws of logic what religion can be proved? One must have some premises on which to build one's pyramid of argument; once admit certain points and any belief is possible. Annette believed that this rowdy blackguard was a type of all that was noble and grand, and she put up with his cruelties and his neglect with the firm conviction that these were a part of the privileges of his rank.

At the beginning of the Terror Pinard found that his vocation was gone. He tried to throw himself into the Republican stream, but certain irregularities, that were a part of his nature, but which were not in keeping with Republican ideas, rendered him an object of suspicion. Annette too was thrown out of work, so that Pinard found that the Government bread would be his portion if he remained in Paris. This he could not tolerate, for he was dainty in his appetite. Putting on his most martial swagger he therefore volunteered for the army, hoping, in the confusion of active service, to do better for himself than he could in Paris. We have seen how he succeeded. Battered, footsore, in rags, and with the seed of a raging fever, he once more presented himself to his wife. She still saw in him the gentleman who had captivated her affections years before. She took him in, she nursed him, she begged for him, and through her care he was once more in a fair way towards recovery.

Pinard, as he sat in his chair, was debating in his mind what he should do. Should he denounce these his enemies? Or should he, by holding over them threats of denunciation, extract from them the means of providing himself with those luxuries he so dearly loved? Chance had placed in his power not only La Beauce whom he hated, but Le Blanc, whose conduct he had not forgotten or forgiven; for Pinard never forgot, and seldom indulged in the luxury of pardoning. He had only to denounce them and he knew full well the whole family would be swept away. But then what would happen to him? He would be reduced to the scanty earnings of his wife, with 'maximum' bread to fall back on. No, he would first try to extract from Le Blanc the good

things necessary to restore him to health and strength. And then he would think of revenge.

'That is it!' he cried aloud, as, his pipe being finished, he rose from his chair.

'What?' asked Annette.

'What is that to thee?' growled Pinard. But, having considered a moment, he walked to his wife, and, taking her by the chin, he pinched it savagely.

'Little woman!' he cried, 'thou hast not done badly. I am content with thee.'

He then patted her on the head and retired content with himself to his chair, to which the bottle stood handy. He felt it necessary to keep his wife in a good humour, and he succeeded, as he knew full well he would. Annette was quite won by his unwonted caresses.

'How good thou art!' she murmured, and a tear fell on M. Robespierre's ruffle, where assuredly a tear could be of little avail.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PINARD'S PLAN OF OPERATIONS.

VIRGINIE was somewhat reassured by finding that Pinard did not immediately present himself at the Grande Nation. It is true that the Mère Annette came each day, and that she received not only her usual viands, but a bottle, nay, sometimes two, of Jacques's excellent wine. But day after day passed and nothing unusual happened, till at last she began to think that perhaps she had wronged this man. So passed the sultry days of June.

In spite of the 'Terror' the café had still some frequenters. M. Barrère still gave dinners to his friends who, belonging to the advanced, or, as it was called, the summit of the Mountain, were the only men proof against denunciation. Some few of the 'Marais,' or 'Plain,' still breakfasted there. These were the men who dared not lift their voices in the Convention through fear of the guillotine, who, dumb and indignant, were made by their timid silence accomplices in the deeds of their masters. Among these was one who knew Virginie well. M. Aubert, the representative from Chartres, was the man of business of the La Beauce family. He came from time to time to the café, bowing to Virginie, and

passing, with eyes cast down, to his place. Once or twice finding her alone he had murmured a few words to her, inquiring after her husband, and informing her that all was as yet well at the château. But one day, in the early part of July, he whispered as he passed that he had important news to give her and would call that night after dark.

That night, true to his word, the worthy man arrived, slipping into the house as though he were a thief. Being ushered into the sitting-room, he was welcomed to the little circle by Jacques himself. Then he informed them that, by the good will of the tenants, and by the help of some legal subtleties which he himself had devised, he had managed to rescue the bulk of the La Beauce property from the hands of the Republican commissaries, but that the château itself, and the woods and farm that surrounded it, had been held in the name of the Republic, its owner having forfeited his property by his supposed emigration. Now he said it had been determined to sell the property. With tears in his eyes he exclaimed against the tyranny of the times. He would have been able to get together enough money from the tenants to effect the purchase, but that war in the Vendée had so impoverished them that it was impossible for them to spare anything. M. le Curé had been obliged to disappear. It was thought he had joined the Vendéans, and it was likely enough. Had he remained, the Republican armies, who had frequently passed through the country, and who had requisitioned the tenants till they were quite destitute, would have no doubt taken him to Nantes, where Carrier had slain priests by hundreds. The Vendée was now a desert, and La Beauce itself would for some years feel the effects of the war. M. Aubert was in despair.

Jacques le Blanc listened to the recital with great emotion. When M. Aubert had finished he started to his feet, and, with a flushed face, eagerly asked how much was required to purchase his son-in-law's château.

M. Aubert named a largish sum.

Then Jacques laughed aloud, as he had not laughed for some months.

'They would sell my son-in-law's house?' he cried. 'The château where his ancestors have lived these hundreds of years? Let them do it, the *scélérats*! They cannot prevent me, Jacques le Blanc, from purchasing.' Then he stepped round and embraced Virginie. 'My daughter,' he cried, 'it is thy *dot* I give thee. The Le Blancs have been careful men for generations. Let

it be their proud privilege to build up the fortunes of their betters! Does not the heir of the La Beauce family represent them too?’

Then he disappeared, and from a dismal hole of a cupboard produced an unsuspecting-looking trunk, which with difficulty he brought into the room. Opening it he showed the astonished M. Aubert the savings of generations. Piece by piece the Le Blancs had hoarded up their gold, with the saving instinct common to the French peasant. As Jacques brought out the *rouleaux* of bright gold pieces, he positively beamed with delight.

‘Take them, M. Aubert; I can trust you,’ he cried, and he pushed them across the table with so generous a hand, that no one could have imagined that he, too, had hoarded and saved what he now seemed so anxious to get rid of.

It was no easy task to load M. Aubert with the gold that he might escape notice. Virginie and Célimène with nimble fingers stitched bags and strengthened pockets, so that when he staggered forth, with affected jauntiness of gait, he did not excite suspicion. Jacques himself accompanied him to the door and, having seen the coast was clear, bade him ‘Good night!’ with all his pristine alacrity.

As he kissed his daughter that night he tenderly placed his hand on her forehead.

‘My Virginie,’ he said, ‘I am more at peace now. Come what may, our little viscount will be well provided, and, when things right themselves, as assuredly they must, he will be able to take the place due to him.’

So was it arranged that M. Aubert should purchase the château with Jacques’ gold, and hold it in his own name till such time as the representative of the La Beauce family should claim his inheritance.

From that time Jacques became quite himself again. His tongue was once more heard scolding Pierre as in former years. He nodded and smiled at Célimène as of yore. As for little Jacques, he never passed him without patting him gently on the head in a patronising way.

‘See you,’ he whispered one day to Célimène, ‘it was not only the danger in which we all live that agitated me; it was also the idea that all the savings of my fathers would go into the pockets of these *coquins*,’ and he spread out his palms as though he would indicate the whole world.

On the 5th of July Annette presented herself as usual to

Virginie, and gave her a letter from 'her man.' With trembling hands Virginie tore it open and read :—

'MADAME,—Through your kindness the soldier has been restored to his health. He longs to be in a position to resume his duties to his country. But, alas! what is a man without those outward necessities which a cruel custom prescribes? A soldier without arms is of no avail, a man without the garments suited to his position is nothing. I would not have your husband think that one who has stood beside him in the defence of his country is reduced to the condition of a veritable *sans-culotte*. The nobleness of his nature, the generosity that becomes one of his exalted birth, would revolt against the idea. Therefore it is I appeal to the lady he has chosen to share his honours, in the absence of my illustrious friend, for temporary aid to enable me to present myself before the world. Nor, madame, such is the confidence I repose in your noble character, shall I appeal in vain. You will, I am sure, so far oblige me as to give my wife the five hundred francs I require. In all liberty and fraternity,

'GABRIEL PINARD.'

When Virginie read the letter she was much agitated; it would be easy for her to give the money, but what then? Would it end there? Would not Pinard come to see her? Could he not compromise her? Denounce her? He evidently knew her secret, he was as evidently bent on trading on his knowledge.

'Annette,' she asked, 'is the *Capitaine* quite restored to health?'

'Thanks to you, madame.'

'Does he talk of rejoining the army?'

'He has not told me what he intends to do.'

'He has asked you to bring back some money, has he not?'

'Madame has read his letter?' asked Annette, looking away to escape Virginie's inquiring eyes.

Virginie hesitated. Annette was evidently on her guard, nothing was to be learnt through her.

With a heavy heart she produced the money in assignats, the paper notes which for some time past had been the only currency. She wrapped them up in an envelope and handed them to Annette.

'Tell your husband that I am glad to assist him to rejoin the armies of the Republic, and shall be much obliged to him if he will allow me to intrust him with an introduction to my husband.'

She could hardly believe this man would again risk his life. She perceived that she had already given him a hold upon her, which he would not fail to use. Nor was she deceived. When Pinard heard the message conveyed through his wife he laughed loud.

‘Really? Madame said that? She is very good. All in good time. For the present the country does not require my services. The frontier is safe.’ And Pinard laughed again loudly.

Annette trembled. She had generally found that when her ‘man’ indulged in merriment it boded no good to some one.

Poor Virginie spent her days in anxious expectation. She had not told Jacques of her adventure at Capitaine Pinard’s. She had not wished to add to his terrors. But now the dread suspense was almost more than she could bear. While Jacques was singing about his work as in the good old times, Virginie sat at her desk anxiously watching each visitor who arrived at the café. Her alarm was increased by the absence of Annette, who no longer came each day to claim her wine and soup. She had not long to wait. On the third day at midday Capitaine Pinard strolled into the principal room of the café. It so happened that that day there was an unusually large number of visitors. Jacques was busy among the tables and turned towards the new comer. Pinard was resplendent in his new clothes. He wore a new grey glossy hat and bottle-green coat. Instead of a waistcoat he wore a knitted *car-magnole* jersey of the three colours prescribed by the fears of the day. Nankeen breeches clothed his nether man, ending in high boots. In his hand he held a rattan with formidable metal knob, which he flourished, as with military swagger he sauntered into the room. Jacques was struck dumb when he saw the man. There was no forgetting that sinister face with its glaring one eye. Four years ago he had thrown this man out of the Couronne d’Or, when a man dared to defend his own, and law was still powerful; but now—?

‘Good day, *citoyen*!’ said Pinard in a harsh voice; ‘thou recognisest me?’

‘What,’ faltered Jacques, ‘does the *citoyen* desire?’

‘*Parbleu*, to eat! and of thy best.’ And the man swaggered up to Virginie and Célimène with a leer and a bow.

‘Good day, *citoyenne*!’ he said, removing his hat with a flourish. ‘The air of Paris and the unwonted duties of the café have not dulled thy beauty.’

The use of the familiar second person singular was now universally prevalent, the ordinary plural of society being thought to show aristocratic tendencies, and betokening a friend of the exiles of Coblenz, and of the terrible 'Pitt.' But in the mouth of this swaggering bully it sounded familiar and brutal.

Virginie was keenly sensible to the threat conveyed in the allusion to her unwonted duties. She managed with her usual skill to control her feelings as she bowed. 'I am glad,' she said, in a low sweet voice, 'to see the *citoyen Capitaine* thoroughly restored to health.' The man glared at her for a minute, and then passed on to a vacant table, at which he took his place with some noise.

'Citoyen le Blanc,' he cried, 'what have we to-day?' Jacques with assumed unconcern ran through his *carté du jour* from which Pinard ordered a dinner of the best. 'Add to it a bottle of thy best Burgundy,' he cried as Jacques retired.

In these days, called according to the Republican calendar Messidor, a man would pass even a friend unrecognised in the street lest he should prove a 'suspect,' and no one in public ventured on a conversation with a stranger, unless he were one in power, who might denounce a rudeness as a want of civism. But Pinard was bent on swaggering: he had determined to assert himself, that he might the more easily overawe Jacques le Blanc. He turned therefore towards his neighbour, a man of swarthy appearance, with very black curly hair, and care-worn and sad look, and cried:—

'I trust Citoyen le Blanc has not forgotten his cunning. He was formerly a *cordons bleu*.'

The man raised his dark eyes with astonishment. '*Citoyen*,' he said in a deep voice, 'where didst thou know the Citoyen le Blanc?'

'Le Blanc?' laughed Pinard. 'Why, at Sèvres, where he kept as good a table as any in France!'

'*Citoyen*,' growled the melancholy man, 'I fear Sèvres was frequented by *aristos* in those days.'

'Why,' answered Pinard, 'aristos there were no doubt, but good friends of the people too, who like myself went frequently to Versailles to encourage the Assembly, which in those days went not fast enough to please us!'

The sad man looked doubtfully at Pinard, but he said no more and occupied himself with some papers. Pinard turned towards his other neighbour. He was a thin, clean-shaven man,

with sharp observant eye. '*Citoyen*,' asked Pinard, 'how works the guillotine to-day?'

'Much as usual,' returned the other. 'It is terribly apt to shave off the heads of those who meddle in business that does not concern them.'

The sad man looked up from his papers.

'Thou sayest the truth for once, *Citoyen* Sieyès,' he said.

Sieyès smiled and bowed. There was so much of fear in that smile that Pinard was startled and silenced. He glanced at the dark man, whose brows were knit, as he fixed his attention on his papers, and his one eye saw on the back of the paper, 'Report to the Committee of Public Safety.' At that moment Jacques followed by Pierre arrived with Pinard's dinner.

'Well, *Le Blanc*,' cried Pinard, 'thou hast not got thinner since we last met.'

Jacques darted a look at the man. He recollected this last meeting. On that occasion he, Jacques, had triumphed. Did his old enemy come back for revenge? The reign of terror had unnerved poor Jacques. His old courage had departed, but his tongue still retained its old trick of reply.

'The *citoyen*, on the contrary, does not look much stouter than he was.'

'Thy Couronne d'Or was frequented by an evil company.'

'Which,' replied Jacques, 'I tried to rid myself of by placing them in the horse trough.'

Pinard would have made an angry reply, but, happening to glance round, to see whether others in the room were listening, he found the dark eyes of the sad man fixed upon him, and his heart sunk within him. Jacques, too, saw that look and inwardly trembled. 'Does the *citoyen* desire anything further?' he asked.

'Nothing,' growled Pinard, 'at least for the present.' As he watched the retiring figure of honest Jacques, he set his teeth. 'I will make thee bleed, my friend, before I have done with thee,' he thought.

Pinard during his dinner was eagerly observant. One by one the occupiers of the room retired, paying their bills, which were made up by Virginie with a trembling hand, and receiving their change from Jacques himself. Soon the sombre, dark-haired man gathered up his papers, and retired in a sullen, dogged manner. Pinard breathed freer as the door shut behind him, and, turning to his other neighbour who was also preparing to leave, he asked with much civility who the *citoyen* was?

Sieyès paused and looked sharply at the questioner. 'Where hast thou been, *citoyen*, not to know Collot d'Herbois?' he muttered, and quickly left the room.

Collot d'Herbois! thought Pinard. Here was a chance. In Jacques's very café he could work his ruin. Among these men he had but to denounce, and the rest would quickly follow. He rubbed his hands on his knees with great satisfaction at the thought. The malicious ingenuity of the manner of his revenge pleased him. But not yet—he would play with this man who was in his power before he took his vengeance. He would prolong the pleasure, dally over the *bonne bouche*, enjoying himself the while. To men of his temperament intrigue forms the pleasure of life. For many years this man had moved in a maze, sometimes holding the thread himself, sometimes guided by others who thought he walked blindly as they willed. Pinard was too shrewd to undeceive them. There was a double zest in knowing he tricked his employers as well as his victims. It gave poetry to his scoundrelism. Alas! in these days he had no work of this kind. This adventure was therefore doubly dear to him. As he sat back in his place, with his eye seemingly closed but really keenly observant, he built a castle in the air greatly to the satisfaction of the builder. He would here feast every day at Jacques's expense, he could here cultivate the acquaintance of these leaders of the Revolution, and who could tell if he might not himself reach the foremost rank of that Revolution? He fancied himself one of the proconsuls sent out to enforce the decrees of the Convention, or commissioner over one of the conquering armies of France. He had seen the power of these men, before whom victorious generals trembled and whole provinces lay prostrate. Pinard had no feelings of mercy; he had no enthusiasm for the Republic; but had he the chance he would have delighted in slaughter, and witnessed it as calmly as Citoyen Carrier at Nantes or Joseph le Bon at Arras.

(To be continued.)

Théophile Gautier.

HE who speaks of Théophile Gautier must speak first of Victor Hugo. Of that great master Théophile Gautier—himself to become a master in beauty of thought, beauty of form, beauty of expression; in fine, of that indescribable but absolutely convincing thing called style, and, as I hope to show, of much more than that—was the most ardent as the most brilliant of disciples. This was in the days of 1830, the days of the production of *Hernani*, the hundred-times-told Waterloo of the classicists and romanticists, the days when Théophile Gautier's famed crimson waistcoat shone as the oriflamme of the new school, who, following their great leader, set their hearts and minds to one purpose. That purpose was to break for ever the hard-and-fast rules of the classical and—one may say it now without bated breath—the pedantic drama. The first night of *Hernani* has never been better described from a humorous point of view than by Reybaud in the immortal memoirs of Jérôme Paturot. Paturot, who may possibly be forgotten by some students of the 1830 period, began by leaving trade and going in for poetry; he ended by going back to trade. It was during his resipiscence that Reybaud met him. The interview begins over a special sort of nightcap which Paturot recommends as being always worn by M. Victor Hugo.

'M. Victor Hugo,' says the buyer of the nightcap; 'do you know him?'

'Know him?' says Paturot, 'know him? Why! I make his nightcaps.'

Then Paturot, led on by the purchaser, tells from his own point of view the story of the celebrated first night of *Hernani*. The story is well worth reading at length; but for the moment we are occupied with Théophile Gautier's part in it—a part which brings us back again to Victor Hugo's influence on the great writer who began as a worshipper of Hugo. Théophile Gautier

himself, writing in 1872, gave in few words, well chosen, as his words always were, a complete description of the effect which the then startling grandeur and poetry of *Hernani* produced.

‘It is difficult,’ Théophile Gautier wrote in 1872, ‘nowadays, when what then passed for barbarous romantic extravagance has become in its turn classical, to indicate the emotion of the audience on hearing these strange lines, so strong, so new, so full of the combined qualities of Corneille and Shakespeare.’

This curiously living reminiscence of a dead time is illustrative of Gautier’s whole character. He was one of those unusual men in whom the breath of genius keeps youth triumphant over the march of years.

If one were to seek about for any other great writer with whom to compare Théophile Gautier, one might do worse than fix upon Heine, with whose passionate poetry, biting wit, and ardent love of the beautiful for its own sake Gautier’s work had much in common. That he borrowed anything from Heine would be a rash assertion to make. The heralds and heroes of the Romantic school—and, for all he was a German, one may class Heine with them—were inspired by the same breath of youth and energy, and, with perhaps one or two exceptions, it would be ungracious and profitless to go about to divide them into classes of merit. I speak, of course, of those who followed in the wake of those two giants Hugo and the great Dumas, whom a writer in the *Quarterly Review* has described, with ineffable gravity and perception, as a mock-heroic tawdry imitator of Walter Scott. Anyhow, one happy sentence of Gautier’s, in his preface to the French edition of Heine’s *Reisebilder*, is by no means inapplicable to Gautier’s own qualities. ‘He mingled,’ wrote Gautier, ‘the lyric spirit with a natural joyousness, and, by mixed descent, moonlight and sunlight had equal shares in his composition. He was full of poetry and full of wit—things which do not always go together. He held sorrow and gaiety in his hand; he was tender and cruel, classical and romantic; he could, in short, be anything except tiresome.’ There was no mixed descent in Gautier’s case; but he, like Heine, could play at will on the strings of wit and of poetry; and, again like Heine, he had one quality which is wanting in at least one of the greatest figures of his time—humour. Heine’s celebrated speech to Berlioz, who came to pay him a visit on what turned out to be his death-bed, might have come from Gautier’s lips: ‘Vous venez me voir, vous! Toujours original!’

Not the least remarkable thing which strikes one in making

such a survey as can be briefly made of Gautier's career and influence is the fact that he never became a member of the French Academy; and this, among other strange matters concerning that august body, is well worth the consideration of those persons who are anxious that English literature should be represented by a body corresponding to the French Academy. M. Bergerat, who has written the only work of value on his Master's life and work, has recorded what Gautier himself said on this subject in the closing period of his career. 'It is a case,' Gautier said, 'of fate and of predestination. One is born an Academician just as one is born a cook, an archbishop, or a policeman. This is what happened to me. The last time that I stood as a candidate I was assured that every voice would be for me. Guizot and Sainte-Beuve, politicians and men of letters, the old school and the new, all were on my side. It was, in fact, an absolute promise, and, more than that, my election would have been the only way of wiping out an old debt that the Academy owed me. When the day of election came every member of the Academy voted for me; after what they had told me themselves I could have no kind of shade of doubt about the matter. Yet, oddly enough, my rival was unanimously elected.'

At this M. Bergerat laughed.

'You laugh,' continued the Master; 'you are wrong. Of course, they all voted for me. They had said they would. It was the wicked fairy who was at my christening who changed the white balls into black ones. I feel sure of this, and so, whenever I meet one of the sacred Forty, I bow profoundly—sometimes I even ask after his health—for now I need not fear to be credited with the motives of Léon Gozlan.'

'What about Léon Gozlan?' asked M. Bergerat.

'You don't know about Gozlan and the Academician?' replied Gautier. 'Then I'll tell you. Gozlan, in spite of an instinct which warned him, as it did me, that he was not born to be an Academician—Gozlan was rash enough to become a candidate, and to start on the regulation visits to the members. But he had wit enough to begin with the sulkiest, the most reactionary, the most mummified, the most atrocious member of the Forty. This personage received him with such agreeable sayings as, "M. Gozlan your name is? Indeed, I have never read a word of your writing. When one gets to my age, one begins to read Racine over again," and so on. Gozlan in answer merely made his formal request for admission to the Academy.'

"But," said the old gentleman, "you want to fill a chair at the Academy? Mighty well—but, so far as I know, there's no chair empty." At this Gozlan rose, and, in a voice which carried conviction and terror, replied, "That is the fact. The chair I want, sir, is YOURS!"

Léon Gozlan was no more disposed to take it lying down from the Academicians than the travelling preacher was from Colonel Quagg. Gautier's resentment against the solemn Forty showed itself chiefly in such pieces of satire as, to take one instance, a passage which occurs in that strange and brilliant mystery play, 'Une Larme du Diable,' where Satan, taking his walks abroad in the fields, meets a crew of rabbits, who join, according to the stage direction, in a chorus.

CHORUS OF RABBITS.

Words by M. Auber. Music by M. Scribe.

Let us sing, let us dance on this beautiful day ;
Let us dance, let us sing in the bright month of May !

SATANAS.

Comic opera, pure comic opera ! I thought the Parisians had the monopoly of listening to such words set to such music ! I had thought better of the rabbits !

It may be that the Academic Forty were as wise in their generation as the Quarterly Reviewer who has described—and that, of course, once and for ever—the brilliant poet, romancer, and journalist in one weighty word, *light-minded* ; a word the exquisite ineptness of which cannot but call to mind a certain rude saying of Charles Lamb's. It is true that this astonishing judgment will be the less odd to any who remember that not so very many years ago another reviewer fell foul of a brilliant English writer, who had discoursed of Gautier, for continually writing about mediæval Frenchmen. Anyhow, for whatever reason, the Forty would none of Gautier—would none, that is, of a man whom they themselves admitted to be in the very first rank of writers, and whose influence on literature it would be difficult to exaggerate in extent and importance. In one of his conversations with M. Bergerat, Gautier summed up in his own inimitable style the nature of this influence, though the Master was modest enough not to say one-tenth part of what a pupil might have said for him.

'I do not know,' he said one day to M. Bergerat, 'what posterity may think of me ; but it does seem to me that I have at least done something for my country's language. When I am dead it would be ungrateful to refuse me the title of a philologist. Ah, my dear boy !' he went on smilingly, 'if only we had as many piastres or roubles as I have won back words from Malherbe and his crew ! You young fellows will be grateful to me one day when you find out what an instrument I have left ready for your hands, and you will defend my memory against the diplomats of letters who, because they have no ideas to express, and no wits to express them with, would restrict us to the hundred words that made up Racine's vocabulary. Note this : when I am recognised as a classic, thought in France will have come near to liberty !'

'You think, then,' said M. Bergerat, 'it has not attained liberty now ?'

'No,' replied Gautier ; 'it is no more at ease than a person whose clothes are too tight, or who has no clothes at all, so that he cannot go out into the street. It is a choice between suffocation and freezing. When thought has found words to fit it, then it begins its march ; and, if these words are beautiful in form and colour, it takes on courage and triumph ; for thus handsomely attired it is welcomed by the great ones of the earth. And if a poet adorns its feet with the two music-making wings of his rhyme, then thought flies and soars !'

[Light-minded stuff this, according to our latest instructor, and with no more intentness of purpose or happiness of expression than what follows.]

'The so-called classical taste,' he continued, 'led straight to the style of a telegram or a bulletin. Victor Hugo, in 1836, put the drag on this headlong descent. His strong hand discovered and met the strong hand of Ronsard in the shade of the ages, and he leapt two centuries of Boileautism to renew the fruitful traditions of the Renaissance. My part,' he went on, 'in this literary revolution was clearly defined. I was painter to the company. I sallied forth to the conquest of adjectives, and I unearthed some whose charm and beauty have now become a necessity of life. I rummaged the Sixteenth Century, to the horror of the regular subscribers to the Théâtre Français and of many worthy folk. I came back with my basket full of rockets and catherine-wheels. I made up the palette of style with all the tones of the daybreak and the sunset. I gave you back red, which had been disgraced by politicians. I wrote poems in White

Major, and when I saw that the result was good, that all authors by birth followed me, and that the Professors sat howling in their chairs, then I formulated my famous axiom, "He who has a thought as complex as you like, a vision as apocalyptic as you please, and has no words to express them—that man is not an author." And so the sheep and the goats were separated, and the creatures of Scribe were parted from the disciples of Hugo, in whom dwells all genius. Such was my part of the victory.'

It is certainly not too much to say that no person, no student who has the least real knowledge and perception of Gautier's work and its influence on literature, can for a moment suppose that in the talk just quoted the Master did anything like full justice to his genius and art. And, in taking any kind of general view of his powers and his performance, there is to be remembered that, while he has left a number of works which can be read again and again with increasing interest and pleasure, he was also for thirty-six years—that is, from 1836 to 1872—a journalist of the most steadygoing and punctual kind. It never occurred to him that the fact of being a poet was any kind of excuse for lateness or irregularity with the daily 'copy' which he made it his business to supply. The 'genius in fetters' cant, which has been too common in every branch of art, was foreign to his theory—or, at any rate, to his practice—of life. He had newspaper work to do, and he did it thoroughly and conscientiously. That did not interfere with his brilliant achievements in lyrical and prose romance, nor—which is a point to be noted by misunderstood geniuses who bemoan their fate—did he ever allow his interest in these brilliant achievements to interfere with the constantly recurring task of newspaper engagements. For such engagements he had, it should be also noted, a singularly fit equipment in the possession of an extent of knowledge which M. Bergerat describes, with hardly too much enthusiasm, as encyclopædic. In art matters he had special knowledge from his early training; but in that kind of information as to which the words 'general knowledge' too often mean a vast smattering of ignorance, he was unusually well furnished. Even his description of London, which he visited in 1848, is no bad answer, taking it altogether, to the current idea that no Frenchman can, without long residence in the country, fall into any understanding of English ways and manners. One curious instance of his accurate acquaintance with matters which might well be supposed out of his ken is recorded in a story of what happened during a visit of his to a country

château. As the story runs, Gautier's host one day took it into his head to have an ancient carp haled out of the fishpond where many such carp dwelt, so that it might be cooked and sent up for dinner. It would seem that the carp was cooked, or rather that the cooks attempted to cook it, in a manner which said mighty little for their intelligence or consideration; for the dining-room was presently invaded by a crowd of chattering and screaming head-cooks and under-cooks, who vowed that, having made one attempt to cook this antique creature, they would make no more. They had plumped it into hot water, and it had put forth such moving and thrilling complaints that they had immediately pulled it out again, and would have no more to do with it. The cooks called it an extraordinary fish. Gautier said, 'Extraordinary! Not at all! All fish complain in that way. This carp had an unusually powerful voice, that is all.' Various persons of science who were staying in the house objected that every tiro in natural history knew that fish could not talk. On this, as it is reported, Gautier delivered a long and eloquent discourse to prove that the men of science were wrong, and the next day one of them, who had left for Paris early in the evening, wrote to him: 'My good friend, I devoted last night to looking to the truth of your assertions about the fish. I have verified every word you said. You are a man of science; we are romancers.'

Along with this story one may conveniently note a very curious prophecy of Gautier's—a prophecy made while he was airing his theories about the human voice, theories which did not lose in interest from the fact that he himself could never sing in tune, although he had a speaking voice of singular beauty. All that he had to say about the difficulty of conveying by written words any idea of the quality of a voice, and all he had to say as to the possibility of overcoming this difficulty, is full of interest, as is his belief of the indication a voice gives of a person's character. But this must be passed, to come to the prophecy that has been spoken of. 'The voice,' he said, 'conveys the instincts and the thoughts of its owner. It is the sounding-board of the soul. Here is a sleeping science waiting for Desbarolles to awaken it, and I wonder he has not undertaken the task. If he did, he might make undreamed-of discoveries which would demand new names; he might discover a means of snatching from the night of time the memory and echo of a dead voice.' Whether Desbarolles was the man for this venture may, with all respect to Gautier, be doubted. But the venture has been made, and the man has been

found in the case of the phonograph and Mr. Edison. Gautier's paradoxical answer concerning his own falseness of intonation is characteristic. 'Singing in tune,' he said, 'is a mere anomaly. A musical voice is a malady of the larynx developed by the Conservatoire. From the point of view of singing masters, the birds sing out of tune; they leave the key every minute.' This, it may be noted, is absolutely untrue; but that is nothing. Birds, according to Gautier, sang out of tune just as, according to Victor Hugo, the air of 'Bonny Doon' was the air of 'Bonny Dundee,' and, that being so, he (Gautier), who sang out of tune, was far more in the right than those people who, with the aid of a morbid civilisation, have learnt to sing in tune.

One thing more may be said in a general glance at Gautier and his work before going on to any details of his career, and it cannot be said more tersely and more fully than by quoting the words of M. Bergerat, who, in entering upon the subject, mentions that a complete edition of all Gautier's work, including his journalism, would amount to not less than three hundred volumes; and that this fact accounts for Gautier's having said, more in sorrow than in anger, 'That is why they call me idle, and why, when I submit myself for admission to the Academy, they say to me, "*Well, what have you done?*"'

'It has been too often asserted,' M. Bergerat wrote twelve years ago, 'that Théophile Gautier, by the very nature of his clear and never-failing genius, would remain a writer tasted only by artistes and professed men of letters. In fact, as taste grows, and reading follows on education, the distance which once separated the mass of the public from the lofty poet is sensibly lessened. How many people have attacked his books with the preconception of finding them filled with outrageous romanticisms and extravagances of style, to find themselves unable to lay down works charged with trained eloquence, full of relief of colour and of clearness! Nowadays, indeed, it is often enough that one hears the finest critics speak of Théophile Gautier as *the* writer who knew French, and wrote it without fear or quailing. Apart from such judgment, it is but now that the world at large has discovered that his qualities, with all their fineness, are vastly popular. Like all great artists, he made a temple for his imagination, fruitful and fantastic as it was. His creations are complete, because of their concentration, and they bear the hall-mark of an immovable ideal of triumphant beauty. . . . Had he so willed it he could no doubt have stooped to the tastes of the

moment, and sunk his talent into the commonplace for a bribe of immediate popularity. . . . But this was not for him, and when one of his works—let us cite *Le Capitaine Fracasse* as an example—attained an instant and material success, that success was not due to any sacrifice made by the writer to the worse tastes of the public.' M. Bergerat, I venture to say, never wrote truer words than these, and in the brilliant success, in all senses of the word, of *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, which was written thirty years after it was planned, and which its author modestly compared to letterpress for etchings by Callot, may be found a complete enough answer—without piling Pelion on Ossa—to such indolent reviewers as regard Dumas as a tawdry imitator, and Gautier in the light of a mere fribble.

Théophile Gautier, or Théo—for they called him so who loved him best—was born at Tarbes on August 30, 1811, and died in 1872, worn out with troubles which gathered round him during the siege of Paris, of which he has left a singularly characteristic account under the title *Tableaux de Siège*. The Gautier family came originally from Avignon, where they possessed a mountain called the Avançon, from which the title of nobility conferred on the poet's grandfather by Louis XV. took its name; so that, had he chosen, Théophile Gautier himself could have taken the name and style of Gautier d'Avançon. Pierre Gautiër, father of Théophile, a man of remarkable talents as it would seem, ruined himself in the service of Charles X., and when, on the restoration of the Bourbons, the King sent word to ask him what could be done to recompense him, he replied that the King had the affairs of France to look after, and that if he, Pierre Gautier, had been a good Royalist, it was a matter of conscience and of pleasure to himself. Pierre Gautier married in 1810 the youngest sister of the Comtesse de Poudens, and by a curious coincidence the parents to be of the future champion of Romanticism went to stay for some time at the Château d'Artagnan, the family château of the undying hero of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*—a work which we are gravely assured is but a tawdry and mock-heroic imitation of Walter Scott. It has been said that Théophile Gautier was born at Tarbes; at the age of three years he left the place, and nearly fifty years afterwards, when he paid a visit to his native town, he heard that the desk he had occupied as a schoolboy had been religiously preserved in the school. Thereon he introduced himself incognito to the principal of the school, and said—which was no doubt more or less true—that he was a great

admirer of Théophile Gautier's writings. On which information the principal with joy and pride conducted him to a schoolroom, and a desk, on neither of which, naturally, had he ever set eyes before. In spite of the preservation of the apocryphal desk, the people of Tarbes did not belie the adage about a prophet and his own country; for when on the poet's death in 1872 it was proposed to erect a statue, the whole cost of which was covered by private subscription, the Municipal Council refused the necessary space. At three years old, then, began Théophile Gautier's residence in Paris, where at first his parents lived, in the Rue du Parc-Royal, in the Marais. At five years old he had learnt to read, and fell in love with *Robinson Crusoe*. At seven years old he began to draw; and at this period his favourite book was *Paul et Virginie*. What is perhaps more odd is that it remained so all his life.

Of his time at school, which he by no means enjoyed (although he had marked success as a scholar), the most noteworthy incident was his friendship with the afterwards well-known Gérard de Nerval, whose real name was Labrunie, and who, when Gautier was nineteen years old, took him to see the god of his idolatry, Victor Hugo. It was this interview with the great Master that decided Gautier to give up the profession for which he was then studying—of painting—and thus gained for literature one of the most brilliant figures that a period rich to abundance in brilliancy can boast. The famous first night of *Hernani*, which followed soon after Gautier's acquaintance with Victor Hugo, has been already referred to as having been described over and over again. In connection with this event, which had so vast an influence on the Romantic movement, it is curious that the last lines which Théophile Gautier penned were concerning *Hernani*. Again, on the revival of *Hernani* in 1867, Théophile Gautier, without his famous red waistcoat, but still remarkable for his leonine locks, was a chief centre of attraction in the audience. He was at this time the dramatic critic of the official Government paper, the *Moniteur*, and people wondered how he would reconcile his duty to the Government with his adoration for the author of *Les Châtiments*. Well, he did *not* reconcile them. He took his article to the *Moniteur* himself, and was entreated to tone down its strain of eulogy. He made no reply, but took a sheet of paper and wrote his resignation. Then he went to M. de Lavalette, the Minister of the Interior, and laid the article and the resignation before him, saying 'Choose.' M. de Lavalette chose the article, which was published without the alteration of a word.

In 1830 appeared, without any marked success, a little pink volume entitled *Poésies de Théophile Gautier*. Three years later came out *Albertus*, a poem of which an English writer, who speaks on such a matter with the highest authority, has said that it 'displayed a good deal of the extravagant character which accompanied rather than marked the (Romantic) movement, but also gave evidence of uncommon command both of language and imagery, and in particular of a descriptive power hardly to be excelled.' The writer goes on to say of Gautier's subsequent poetry that it more than fulfilled the promise of *Albertus*, and adds that the *Comédie de la Mort* 'is one of the most remarkable of French poems, and, though never widely read, has received the suffrage of every competent reader.' *Albertus*, which made a distinct hit, was followed by a prose volume of half-humorous, half-pathetic stories, which was called *Les Jeunes France*, and which, as its name implied, dealt chiefly with that very Romantic movement in which its author held so prominent a position. This work was published by Eugène Renduel, who was emboldened by its success to give the author a commission for a sensational romance. Gautier's accepting this commission led to a result remarkable in more ways than one. He took for the subject of his romance the very curious, but by no means very reputable, adventures of a certain Mlle. d'Aubigny, who, born in 1673, married at an early age a certain Monsieur Maupin. Her adventures after this were not edifying, and Gautier idealised his heroine and her odd career in a work which nevertheless created a vast scandal—*Mlle. de Maupin*.

On this work—which certainly was not written for girls and boys—it is not necessary or desirable to dwell here at any length; but this much may be said about it, that its author was the very last person to have tolerated the *boues d'artifice* of M. Zola and his school, which raised no scandal where once *Mlle. de Maupin* raised a great one, and that it has formed the subject of one of the finest sonnets of a living English poet of the very first rank.

Some time after the publication of this book Théophile Gautier, whose father had been appointed Receiver-General at Passy, went to live in the Impasse du Doyenné with his friends Gérard de Nerval, Arsène Houssaye, and Camille Rogier. Here was given a famous entertainment which was devised by the upholders of the Romantic movement for the glorification of their school and the discomfiture of their classical opponents. The panels of the walls were painted for the occasion by Adolphe Leleux, Célestin Nanteuil, Corot, Chassériau, Camille Rogier,

Lorentz, Marilhat, and Théophile Gautier. The Impasse du Doyenné has disappeared, and with it these works of art, like the paintings on the walls of Gore House, have disappeared into the vast of time.

It was at this period that Gautier entered into relations with Balzac. Balzac, unlike the writer who has recently dismissed Gautier as a light-minded person, had a great admiration for the young romancer's work, and asked him to contribute to the *Revue de Paris*, which he had just founded, and in this Review appeared *La Morte Amoureuse*, *La Chaîne d'Or*, and other equally brilliant short stories. But, of various stories concerning Balzac and the younger novelist, M. Bergerat picks one out as especially characteristic of both men and of their mutual friendship. Curmer had conceived the idea of the publication to be called *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, and came to Balzac to secure his support and contributions. Balzac accepted, on condition that the work should include a study of Balzac and his work, to be written by Théophile Gautier. Curmer accepted the condition. Balzac rushed to the Rue de Navarin, where Gautier was then living, and offered him the commission, which was accepted with joy. 'The price,' said Balzac, 'will be five hundred francs.' Théophile had soon written the article, and taken it himself to the publisher, but was too modest to ask for the payment. A week passed, a fortnight passed, and he heard nothing more of the article or of Balzac. One fine day Balzac came to see him and said, 'I do not know how to thank you. Your article is a masterpiece. As I thought ready money might not come amiss to you, I have brought the amount agreed on with me.' So saying he put down two hundred and fifty francs.

'But,' said Gautier timidly, 'I thought you said it was to be five hundred francs. Of course it was my mistake.'

'Not at all,' Balzac replied; 'you are perfectly right. It *was* to be five hundred francs. But just think a moment. If I had never lived, you could never have said all the fine things you have said of me. That is obvious. Without my existence there would have been no article—without the article there would have been no money. Very well, I take half the money as the subject of the article. I give you half as its author. Is not this justice?'

'The justice of Solomon,' answered Gautier—and, what is more, he always thought so.

Besides his contributions to Balzac's Review, Gautier wrote for the *Figaro*, *L'Eldorado* (1837), better known by the name of

Fortunio, given to it when it came out in volume form in 1838. The same year saw the production of the *Comédie de la Mort*, already referred to, with which work ended his first, and in some ways happiest, period of literary achievement. For it was after this that the force of circumstances made him betake himself to the constant, steady, and punctually executed journalism which has been spoken of, and of which the results are estimated at no less than three hundred volumes. From 1836 to 1855 he wrote criticisms of literature and art, sharing the work, to begin with, with Gérard de Nerval, for Emile de Girardin's paper the *Presse*. Simultaneously with his unremitting labour at this work, he brought out *Une Larme du Diable* (1839), *Les Grotesques*, the *Ballet de Giselle*, given at the opera in 1841, *Tra los Montes* (1843). Among other works produced, always with the stress of journalism going on, between 1839 and 1871, were, the *Voyage en Espagne*, *Caprices et Zigzags*, *Un Trio de Romans*, *Emanx et Camées*, *Avatar* and *La Gattatura*, *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, *Romans et Contes*, *Loin de Paris*, *Spirite*, *Ménagerie Intime*, and *Tableaux de Sièges*. Posthumous productions were, *Histoire du Romantisme*, *Portraits Contemporains*, *Portraits Littéraires*, *L'Orient*, and *Poésies Complètes*.

M. Bergerat, in concluding his only too short biography with a list of what Gautier did, asks with perfect justice what man of the century can be pointed to as having worked harder? The question is asked without any direct reference to the extraordinarily fine quality of most of the work. No statue, as M. Bergerat remarks, has been raised to the poet, no street or square in the capital where the lustre of his genius shone bears his name; and it may be added, now, when the rest of the world knows better, a writer whose instruction is rivalled by his judgment sums up Théophile Gautier as light-minded.

Considering the amount and variety of first-rate work that Théophile Gautier has left to commemorate his name and fame, it is by no means easy to make the right selection of the very few works which it is possible to dwell upon in a limited space as fairly representing in any way the area of his genius. But, supposing that one were to try more or less *le hasard de la fourchette*, one might do worse than pull out of the bowl *Capitaine Fracasse*, *Spirite*, and *Ménagerie Intime*. *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, projected, planned, advertised in the full 1830 period, never got itself written until 1863. The author himself, in a delightful *avant-propos*, has given some account of its long gestation.

Le Capitaine Fracasse, compact as it is of life and fire, of wit and humour and poetry, can very well hold its own with works so different in some ways both from it and from each other as *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Esmond*. With the great author of *Esmond* Gautier had more things, superficially at least, in common than he had with the great Dumas. Like Thackeray, he began life with the ambition to be a painter-artist, and, like him, he ended by being a past-master of literary style and characterisation. There was one marked difference: Thackeray, though he played the critic well enough, as he would have played almost any part in literature, lacked the true critical faculty. This was not so with Gautier; your true critic is born a critic, as—to re-quote Gautier's serious-jesting words—he may be born an archbishop, a cook, or a detective. Gautier was born a critic and a poet. One can even this combination in the case of the English poet who has written so admirably of Gautier, but the concatenation is not ordinary.

In Gautier as in Thackeray there was a peculiar way of looking at mankind and their doings. Thackeray shared Gautier's admiration for certain results of the Romantic movement, and they both had to an extraordinary degree what is called in French *le trait*—a word almost impossible to translate. An elaborate comparison of the likenesses and differences between Dumas, Thackeray, and Gautier might well take us too far afield. What may be said without fear of contradiction, and what is to the immediate purpose, is that Gautier in *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, as Thackeray in *Esmond*, entered body and soul into the spirit, manners, and talk of a time which he could only realise by instinct and by learning. And when for such achievements these two things come together, they spell a very great and very misused word—Genius.

Genius was a gift enjoyed by the three men whose names have been put together. Dumas's genius was, at any rate in the novel specially cited, a trifle careless at moments; Thackeray's was in *Esmond* if anything too watchful over the task it had set itself. Gautier combined the fire of the one with the care of the other, and never faltered until—and here some faltering must be admitted—the conclusion of the book. Here he goes to pieces in exactly that way which the other two great writers might, and probably would, with their differing methods have avoided. There is no use in denying that Gautier's catastrophe is ill designed, unpleasant, and possibly borrowed, consciously or unconsciously, from the only unpleasant thing in the novels of that

Walter Scott of whom we are told, on such excellent authority, the great Dumas was a tawdry and mock-heroic imitator. Granted this defect—and it is a defect—what can one find but praise for the fire and buoyancy and accuracy and convincing life of a romance of adventure of the time of Louis XIII., written thirty years after its author had invented and projected it? Every page is charged, not only with the instinct of the time depicted, but also with a spirit that brings the dry bones of that time to life; that says, in fact, what Brother Lustig said *without* effect in the story preserved by the Brothers Grimm, ‘Get up, you shining fellows.’

It has been said, and that not once or twice, that Gautier owed something to Scarron’s *Roman Comique* for the opening scenes of *Le Capitaine Fracasse*. Well, he did about as much as Shakespeare owed to prose stories for *Hamlet* or *Othello*. Barring this suggestion, the work is Gautier and pure Gautier.

Gautier’s love and understanding of animals, which he shared with the great Dumas, comes out, as in *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, constantly in his writings, but specially, of course, in the volume called *Ménagerie Intime*, which is a delightful little book on the same lines as Dumas’s *Histoire de mes Bêtes*. It is true that it contains nothing so exciting as Dumas’s account of his fight with his new dog, and it may be not unfairly added that Gautier would never have behaved so badly to a dog as Dumas did on that occasion. Théo’s attitude with regard to dogs, however, had its own and characteristic oddity. He did not the least deny the soundness of Charlet’s axiom, *Ce qu’il y a de mieux dans l’homme c’est le chien*; but he confessed that his love for dogs always went hand in hand with a terror of hydrophobia—a terror which he never felt with regard to cats. Here his encyclopædic knowledge for once failed him; but then no one is ever so ignorant as a learned man. Nevertheless, Théo knew and loved dogs, although, like many other people, he found something disquieting in the deep and mysterious looks which they fix upon you. But it was to cats that he was specially attached, and as the Swiss painter was called the Cats’ Raphael, so might Gautier have been called the Cats’ Homer. The history of all his cats, as given in the *Ménagerie Intime*, is delightful enough, but perhaps the most interesting of all was the animal known as Madame Théophile. This creature’s first introduction to a parrot, which Gautier was taking care of for a friend, took place under his eyes, and his description of it is an instance of his keen observation and sympathy.

The parrot, which apparently was an Amazon, perplexed at its new lodging, had climbed to the highest point of its stand, and remained there, rolling its steely eyes and working its nictitating membrane. Madame Théophile, the cat, who had never seen a parrot before, regarded the strange creature with astonishment. Immovable as a mummied Egyptian cat, she looked, lost in thought, at the bird, recalling all the ideas on natural history which she had gathered in the garden and the roof trees. Her shifting eyes alone conveyed her thoughts; and these thoughts were, *Then here is a green chicken.* Having arrived at this conclusion, the cat leapt from the table to a corner of the room, where she lay in an attitude like that of Gérôme's black panther watching the gazelles. The parrot followed the cat's movements with a feverish eagerness. He ruffled his feathers, he rattled his chain, he lifted one of his hands and examined its nails attentively, and he scrabbled his beak on the edge of his food-can. Instinct bade him beware of an enemy on his track.

The cat's eyes were fixed on the bird with a deadly charm, and these eyes said, in a language which was probably intelligible to the parrot, *This fowl is green, but all the same it must be good to eat.*

Gautier, noting all this, watched the animal comedy, ready to intervene if intervention were needed. The cat drew nearer and nearer to the parrot's stand; her pink nose palpitated, her eyes half closed, her claws, like the feet immortalised by Suckling, went in and out.

Suddenly she arched her back, and with a feline bound leapt to the foot of the parrot's stand. The parrot met the danger half way, and received the cat with a phrase delivered in a pompous bass voice, *'As-tu déjeuné, Jacquot?'* This phrase filled the cat with an indescribable terror, and caused it to leap backwards. A flourish of trumpets, an earthquake of broken crockery, a pistol discharged by its ear, could not have caused the cat a more head-long alarm. All the creature's ideas on ornithology were completely upset.

The parrot continued its triumphant speech with the words, *'Et de quoi? De rôti du roi!'*

Then the cat's face said as plainly as possible, *This is no bird. This is a gentleman. Listen to his conversation.*

Then the parrot, pursuing his advantage, burst at the top of his voice into the refrain of a drinking song. On this the cat

cast one desperate look of interrogation upon Gautier, and fled in despair under the bed, where it remained for all the rest of the day.

The same cat had an extraordinary love of perfumes and of music, as to which latter taste it had one strange peculiarity. It could not endure the note G, and always put a reproving and silencing paw on the mouth of anyone who sang it.

A parallel to this oddity was found in the case of Théo's spaniel dog Zamore, of whom it was written, 'Who would have thought that under this dog's calm, independent, philosophic, earnest exterior there lay hidden an overmastering and amazing passion, which no one could have suspected, and which formed the oddest contrast with the character, physical and moral, of this creature, whose seriousness amounted to sadness?'

'You will suppose,' Gautier went on, 'that the good Zamore was, let us say, a thief? No. He was fond of cherry brandy? No. He was given to biting? Not at all. Zamore was consumed by a passion for dancing!'

Gautier in his lightest, or shall we say with the ineffable critic his most light-minded style, goes on to describe how Zamore met a troop of dancing dogs, and was straightway filled with admiration, which led to emulation, insomuch that he attempted to join in the show, and was treated with contumely by its proprietor. He returned home dejected and thoughtful, and that night Gautier's sisters, who inhabited the room next to that in which Zamore slept, were awaked by a curious pattering noise, interrupted now and again by the sound of a falling body. Investigation showed that it was Zamore practising steps all by himself. He then became an assiduous spectator at the dancing dogs' exhibition, watched them carefully, and practised by himself every night, and finally, when he was satisfied with the result of his studies, he invited fifteen or twenty dogs of his acquaintance to come and see his performance. He died of brain fever, brought on by overwork in learning the schottische, which was then the fashionable dance of the day.

After Zamore came a singing dog, and then Dash—a dog of such human conversation that sometimes Gautier said to him: 'You are not talking, you are barking.—*Est-ce que par hasard vous seriez un animal?*'

The third book which has been selected as illustrative of Gautier's singularly varied powers—the book called *Spirite*—is as unlike the other two in everything except the charm of a perfect

style as a book well can be. It is a work of pure fantasy, and a work which should delight members of the Psychical Research Society. Its scenes are laid in modern Parisian life—its hero is a young man in the thick of Parisian society, but with a mind far above mere society life. Its heroine is the spirit of a young girl who has loved him with a depth and truth of affection never requited in her lifetime, and only known to him when he becomes conscious of her existence in a spiritual state. The introduction, if one may call it so, is effected partly by the means of a Norse diplomat, the Baron de Feroë, who is at once a complete man of the world and an ardent Swedenborgian, and who, finding dispositions to the mystical in Guy de Malivert, helps him on his way to that intercourse with the spiritual world which enables him to write at Spirite's dictation the touching and purely charming story of her love for him when she was an inhabitant of this earth. Those who are acquainted with the very remarkable and very serious mystical work written by a brilliant English writer whose death was but lately lamented will see a curious coincidence between his views and those expressed in Gautier's fascinating romance. Gautier's Spirite has also something in common with Hoffmann's *Elementargeist*; and in a more roundabout way with Cazotte's *Diable Amoureux*. The Baron de Feroë plays the same part towards Malivert that Soberano in Cazotte's story plays to Don Alvare, only Feroë is a gentleman, and Soberano is very much the reverse. Another coincidence is that, after the publication of the *Diable Amoureux*, Cazotte received a visit from a mysterious cabalist and Rosicrucian, who greeted him with astounding and secret signs, and was immensely surprised at receiving no reply in signs of the same kind, and at finding that Cazotte, so far from being a past-master in cabalism, knew absolutely nothing about it. Gérard de Nerval, who tells the story, goes on to relate that the stranger then and there initiated Cazotte, and exercised immense influence on Cazotte's subsequent life; but then Gérard de Nerval was a romancist of the purest blood. What is curious is that, after the publication of *Spirite*, Gautier received innumerable letters from so-called adepts, who wrote to him as if he were one of themselves, only infinitely beyond them in instruction. There is another notable coincidence in *Spirite*, viz. that the Baron de Feroë attributes Malivert's swift penetration of the veil between the material and the spiritual life to his profuse consumption of green tea; this, it will be remembered, is the very means by which the same veil is

penetrated in the most powerful of Sheridan Le Fanu's short stories, which indeed is entitled *Green Tea*.

Spirite may be recommended to all readers who wish to form an idea of Gautier's style, who do not dislike fantastic stories, and who may have been terrified by the notoriety of one book of his into the idea that in everything he wrote there is something quite too shocking. It is eminently a book for the young person who has no dislike for purely imaginative and esoterical fiction. Attention has been directed already to the exquisite *Tableaux de Siège*, the last work penned by an extraordinarily brilliant poet, novelist, critic, essayist and journalist—an author whose work is as full of beautiful thought as it is perfect in expression; an author who has been dismissed as light-minded by the same amazing writer who can find nothing in the finest work of the great Dumas but tawdriness and mock-heroism. Of Gautier's poetry it is very difficult to give any kind of idea in a short space; but one sonnet of his, published after his death, may be quoted as illustrating his thought, and the form in which he clothed it. It has no title, and it runs thus:—

Sur un coin d'infini traînant son voile d'ombre
La terre obscure allume à l'éternel cadran
Sirius, Orion, Persée, Aldébaran,
Et fait le ciel splendide en le rendant plus sombre.

On voit briller parmi les étoiles sans nombre
L'énorme Jupiter dont un mois vaut notre an,
Et Vénus toute d'or, et Mars teint de safran,
Et Saturne alourdi par l'anneau qui l'encombre.

A ces astres divers se rattache un destin:
Jupiter est heureux, Mars hargneux et mutin,
Vénus voluptueuse, et Saturne morose.

Moi, mon étoile est bleue et luit même en plein jour,
Près d'une oreille sourde à mes soupirs d'amour,
Sur le ciel d'une joue adorablement rose !

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Polly, a Governess.

THE mice are away, and the cat will play ;
 The children are out for the livelong day,
 So Polly will have it all her own way.

Polly is barely turned nineteen ;
 She hasn't at all a cat-like mien ;
 The sweetest smile that ever was seen

Plays on her lips, that are dainty red ;
 And brown is the hair of her bonny head,
 And light is the little lady's tread,

And low is the little teacher's speech ;
 So gladly she'll learn, so gladly teach,
 It is good to be within her reach.

There's plenty of fun at her command ;
 She doesn't look proud at all nor grand ;
 But you rarely find a firmer hand.

The children, that others used to say
 Could not, or would not, learn to obey,
 Do Polly's bidding day by day.

Small wonder it is, because, you see,
 Obedience on love should grafted be ;
 And Polly loves them heartily.

Their little griefs and little joys
 She knows, and she mends their broken toys,
 And she likes to hear their merry noise.

Full many a dear delicious thing
She tells them of birds upon the wing,
And the brooding-time when sweet they sing.

She knows the haunts of wild flowers rare ;
She has climbed full many a sea-rock where
Was a chance to find wild maidenhair.

They say she's 'a brick,' and it ne'er disturbs
That faith when little Polly curbs
Their glee with 'horrid irregular verbs.'

(Does Polly feel, or does she know,
How from man's heart, in the long ago,
Words came for his need in their heat and glow?)

Oh, life, to her, is full of delight,
A rapture and wonder of dark and bright,
Of things past worth for the ear and sight.

To-day they have left her all alone ;
To London town are the children gone ;
They'll not come back till the sun goes down.

'Good-bye, little cat !' did the children say,
When they kissed her that morn and went away ;
'When the mice are away the cat will play.'

What will the little pussy do ?
'Tis something very strange and new
To be all alone, for a long time too.

Perhaps she will turn out drawers to see
Where pretty stuffs and ribbons be,
And look them through, Miss Vanity,

And ply her needle and thread a space,
Till a brand-new hat is ready to grace
Her pretty head and her sunny face.

Or will she think it shame to press
This day's delicious loneliness
Into the service even of dress ?

POLLY, A GOVERNESS.

Perhaps she will write a home-letter
To the ones who love to hear from her,
And say she could not be happier,

Unless the good time were to come
When, once again a child at home,
No more from them she would ever roam ;

Or gather the ready-ripened seed,
Or tend to the pigeons' hunger or greed,
Then take her book for a lovely read,

And under the ash where long boughs all
Droop green and fair, in a shady hall,
Miss Polly will have a delicious sprawl.

She scarce will think and she scarce will muse,
But lie as thinkers and dreamers use,
Until the time of the evening dews.

But the carriage-wheels will be heard at last,
And the little cat's play be over and past,
For the day will have slidden by so fast.

Oh, in the happiest life 'tis well
To be all alone for a little spell,
As many and many a one can tell :

And Polly will work the better, we say,
To-morrow, because of this to-day,
When the mice were away and the cat could play.

EMILY H. HICKEY.

A Pack of Cards.

‘**Y**OU see these? They belonged to Francis Farmer; Colonel Farmer he called himself; “The Colonel,” he was known as among his pals. Did you ever hear of him?’ I could not say that I ever had. ‘He was a card himself, the Colonel was. An American. He had had something to do with the army, once upon a time, I fancy; but he had had more to do with the police. He was one of the greatest swindlers of modern times—an artist, the Colonel was.’

‘And these are some of the implements of his profession?’

I was paying a visit to the Rogues’ Museum at Scotland Yard, that queer establishment in which they preserve mementoes of criminals who, at various periods, have, in some way or other, had dealings with the police. The constable who was acting as my cicerone was holding in his hand a pack of cards. I took them into mine. They were a pack of what are commonly called ‘squeezers.’ They had rounded corners, and in the corner of each card was a statement of its value. Such a pack, indeed, as is generally used, by properly-constituted persons, for the game of poker. There was nothing about the cards in any way remarkable, so far as I could see, except that on their backs was painted a large, blush-red rose, as it seemed to me, by hand. But according to the constable they had a history.

‘The Colonel won thousands with those cards.’

‘By the exercise of his skill?’

‘It’s as you choose to call it. They’re hand-painted (I thought they were), and excellently painted too. If you look at them closely you’ll see that the rose is not placed in exactly the same position on the back of each of them. There’s just a shade of difference.’

I did look at them closely. It was as the constable said. But it needed good eyes to observe the fact, the difference in position was so slight.

‘He used to travel up and down the line to Brighton.’

‘That’s odd. I’m going down to Brighton myself by the 2.30 this afternoon. I live there.’

‘Ah! He was well known upon that road. They used to think he was a big pot in the City who liked his hand at cards. City gentlemen often have a game as they come up to town. It’s a regular thing. It was a well-known pack, the Colonel’s. He won his fare, and a bit over, many a time.’

‘And where is this enterprising person now?’

‘He’s dead, that’s where he is. Francis Farmer was sentenced for the term of his natural life for attempted murder. Perhaps you remember the case. It was on the Brighton line. They spotted him at last—he was a little too fond of winning, the Colonel was. He drew a revolver and put a bullet into the man who spotted him. For that he was sent to Portland. He tried to escape, and when they nabbed him he committed suicide in his cell.’

‘Then there is quite a curious interest connected with this pack of cards?’

‘You may say so. There are some very queer tales told about them—very queer. They say they’re haunted. I don’t know much about that sort of thing myself, but some of our chaps do say that wherever those cards are the Colonel isn’t very far away.’ I smiled. The constable seemed a little huffed. ‘I only know that I shouldn’t care to carry them about with me myself.’

As we were going out a gentleman entered. The constable seemed to know him, for he allowed him to pass without challenge. I went to Simpson’s to lunch. I was thinking, as I ate, about what I had seen, memorials of hideous murders, a unique collection of burglars’ tools, coiners’ moulds, forgers’ presses, ingenious implements for every sort of swindling—a perfect arsenal of crime! I am free to confess that that pack of cards was present to my mind. What a relic for a man to possess—a haunted pack of swindler’s cards! I ought to have looked at them more closely; perhaps some of the victim’s blood was on the back of one of them. *De gustibus non disputandum*—some men would give a good round sum for such a curio!

After luncheon I strolled along the Embankment to Victoria. I caught the 2.30 to Brighton. As I was standing at the door of the carriage two other persons entered in front of me, brushing past me as they went. When I had taken my seat a third person entered just as the train was starting. I was seated with my

back to the engine, at the end which was farthest from the platform. The newcomer sat facing the engine at the other end of the carriage. He was a tall, slight, military-looking individual, with a slight moustache, and, as I could see under the brim of his top hat, crisp, curly black hair. The two persons who had entered previously were seated in front of me at my end of the carriage.

I had some papers with me, but felt disinclined to read. I had had a heavy lunch, and the result was to make me drowsy. I fancy that I was all but dropping off, when someone spoke to me.

‘Haven’t we met before?’

I glanced up. The man speaking was the man in front of me, who sat nearest to the door. When I eyed him closely I remembered him. He had sat next to me at a dinner which had been given, a few days previously, to Lord Labington, whose political exertions, as every one is aware who is of the right way of thinking, have saved the country! An amusing neighbour I had found him. He had struck me as a fellow of a lively wit and of infinite jest. I was glad to meet him again. I told him so.

‘Awfully slow, this kind of thing.’ I suppose he meant going down by rail to Brighton. He did! ‘This train is a dreadful slow-coach; takes no end of a time.’

‘It’s a pity,’ I said, thinking of the Colonel’s exploits upon that very line, ‘that we haven’t such a thing as a pack of cards!’

While I was speaking I thrust my right hand into the pocket of the light summer overcoat which I was wearing. It lighted upon something whose presence I had not been conscious of before. There were several articles, in fact. Supposing that I had put some things there and forgotten all about them, I drew one of them out to see what it could be. It was a playing-card. I drew more of them out. They were more playing-cards. There was an entire pack. And—could I be dreaming?—it was the pack of cards which had belonged to ‘Colonel’ Francis Farmer!

It was entirely out of the question to suppose that I was mistaken. I had seen them too recently, observed them too attentively, and bore them too well in mind for that. They were altogether unmistakable, with the hand-painted red roses on their backs. But how came they in my pocket? To describe my feelings when I realised that they really were that ‘haunted’ pack is altogether beyond my power. I remembered returning

them to the constable; I remembered his replacing them in the glass case; I remembered his turning the key in the lock; and yet——

I suppose that there was something in the expression of my countenance which to an onlooker was comical, for I was all at once conscious of the sound of laughter.

‘Hallo!’ exclaimed my opposite neighbour. ‘Why, you do appear to have a pack of cards!’

‘I—I do appear to have a pack of cards; but—but *how* I have them is more that I can say.’

‘You didn’t steal them, I suppose?’

‘Not—not consciously.’

My opposite neighbour and his friend began to laugh again. The man at the other end of the carriage sat quietly cold. How I knew I cannot say, but I did know that his eyes were fixed upon me all the time.

‘Never mind how you got them; you have got them, that is the point. Supposing we have a hand at Nap. What do you say, Armitage?’

He turned to his friend. Then to me: ‘I don’t know if you’re aware of it—I don’t think we got so far as exchanging cards the other night—but my name’s Burchell.’

‘And my name’s Ranken.’

‘Very well, Mr. Ranken, supposing after this general naming of names we set to work. Hand me over the cards.’

He stretched out his hand. I hesitated before I gave him them. To put it gently, they were not mine. And—should I tell him their history or should I not? He did not give me time for reflection.

‘Come along! Are you afraid I’m going to steal them?’

He took them out of my grasp. I was so bewildered by the discovery of their presence that I had really not recovered sufficient presence of mind to say him either yea or nay.

‘What points? Suppose we say pounds?’

Pounds! I started. Pound points at Nap! Not if I knew it. Pennies were more in my line. I was pleased to observe that his friend, Mr. Armitage, did not second his suggestion.

‘Don’t you think pound points are a trifle stiff?’

‘Well, make it half-sovereigns, then, and a pound in the pool.’

‘I don’t mind half-sovereigns.’

But I did, most emphatically. Why, with a pound in the

pool, I might lose fifty pounds and more before I reached the other end. I have played penny Nap, and risen poorer by half-a-sovereign. I had been up to, draw my dividends; I wondered what Mrs. Ranken would say if I returned to her minus fifty pounds.

'I—I'm no player. I—I couldn't think of playing for half-sovereigns.'

'Then make it dollars, then. We must have something on the game.'

Something on the game! If we had five-shilling points we should have a good deal more than I cared to have upon the game. But without waiting for my refusal, Mr. Burchell commenced to deal the cards—the 'Colonel's' cards!

I never had such luck before. It really was surprising. From the very first I won. Not spasmodically, but persistently,—hand after hand, with a regularity which, in its way, was quite phenomenal.

'It's a pity,' said Mr. Burchell, when I had made Nap for the third time within a quarter of an hour, 'that we didn't make it pounds. I don't think anything could stand against your cards.'

'I have had some decent hands,' I agreed. 'It's rather odd, too, because generally I do no good at Nap.'

'No? I should imagine, by the way in which you're going it, that you're like that third player in *Punch*, who held thirteen trumps at whist.'

I laughed. Curiously enough, my luck continued. It was quite a record in its way. I *never* lost: I *always* had three trumps.

'Do you know,' observed Mr. Armitage, when I again took Nap, that I'm nearly thirty sovereigns to the bad. I think it's quite as well we didn't make it pounds.'

'I'm about that much nearer the workhouse since I left Victoria,' chimed in his friend.

I was amazed.

'You don't mean that I've won sixty pounds?'

'It looks uncommonly like it.'

It was incredible. And *yet* my luck continued. I went three tricks that round, and made them. Then another three, then four, and then another Nap. Reckon that up, and you'll find that, with the points and the dealer's ten shilling contribution to the pool, I had made thirteen pounds in considerably less than half that number of minutes.

'You will excuse my asking you,' said Mr. Burchell, as he was settling for the Nap, 'if that pack of cards of yours is bewitched?'

'I think it possible,' I answered, half in jest and half in earnest. 'There is a curious history attached to them, at any rate.'

'There will be another curious history attached to them if this goes on much longer.' It *did* go on. The very next hand I signalled four, and made them. My antagonists began to look blank; no wonder!

'We ought to send this to the *Field*. It ought to have a niche among curious games,' said Mr. Armitage.

Mr. Burchell shuffled, Mr. Armitage cut, and I dealt the hand. Burchell went three, Armitage four, and I went Nap! I had ace, king, queen, and four of clubs, and king of diamonds. Not a bad Nap hand when three are playing.

'What, Nap again!' cried Burchell. 'Great Scott!'

'Never mind,' said Mr. Armitage, 'I'm prepared for anything.'

I was about to lead the ace of clubs, when the stranger, who was seated at the other end of the carriage, left his end and advanced towards ours.

'Excuse me, gentlemen!'—he addressed himself to my antagonists—'you are being robbed. This gentleman is too clever a player for you. I should say that he was a professional swindler!'

'What the dickens do you mean?' asked Mr. Armitage. 'And who are you?'

'I'm an old traveller. I've seen this kind of thing before. But I've never seen quite such beautiful simplicity as yours. I do believe you'd let him get Napoleon, in continuous succession, right from here to Brighton, and still think it all serene. Just a little accident worth sending to the *Field*.'

There was silence. Armitage and Burchell both looked at me. I felt that suspicion was in their glances. As for myself, I was so startled by the enormity of the charge that I momentarily was stricken dumb. I could not realise that the fellow was actually accusing me of theft.

'Do you—do you mean to suggest,' I gasped, when I had sufficient breath to gasp, 'that I—I've been cheating?'

'That is what I do mean. You have hit it on the head. It is inconvenient for you, no doubt. But I'm going to make it more inconvenient still. I'm going to prove it, before the sitting's ended.'

'You—you infernal scoundrel!'

I sprang up, as if to strike the fellow to the ground. But he remained entirely unmoved. His calmness, or assurance, rather reacted on me, and I refrained.

‘Suppose we leave the adjectives till a little later on? Then, it is just possible that each man will have a few of his own to scatter round.’

He turned to my antagonists.

‘It’s funny, gentlemen, very, but directly I saw those cards I thought I’d seen that pack before. I have a good eye for a card. The more I saw of them the more I felt that we had met before. And now I’ll swear we have. A pack of cards very like that pack once belonged to a very famous personage; more famous, perhaps, than worthy. His name was Francis Farmer.’

My surprise at hearing this name from the stranger’s lips must have betrayed itself in my countenance. He immediately turned to me.

‘I fancy that is a name which this gentleman has heard before. Is that not so?’

‘I—I have heard it before,’ I stammered.

‘I thought you had. Yes, gentlemen, there is the own brother to this pack of cards at this moment in the museum at Scotland Yard. Perhaps this gentleman’s knowledge of the profession which he adorns so well will enable him to corroborate that fact.’

‘This—this is the pack.’

‘Do tell! That’s candid, now. What, the Colonel’s own! It’s beautiful; for, gentleman, Francis Farmer was a swindler, a card-sharper, a thief. He had all the talents. Permit me, sir, to examine his favourite pack of cards.’

The stranger took the cards which Mr. Armitage was holding in his hand.

‘If you observe the beautiful rose which adorns their rears, you will observe that there is a slight variation in its position on the back of every card.’

‘I don’t deny it for a moment.’

I regained my presence of mind when I perceived that the fellow was not a mere impudent vagabond who wished to make himself objectionable, but that, in appearance, he really had something on which to base his assumptions.

‘That is very good of you; more especially as we have eyes of our own which would enable us to perceive it for ourselves even if you did.’

‘If you will allow me I will explain how I become possessed

of this pack of cards, which, I believe, really were the property of the infamous individual of whom this gentleman speaks. You will remember that I was surprised when I found them in my pocket?’

I addressed myself to Armitage.

‘I remember that you appeared to be.’

I did not like his tone at all.

‘I not only appeared to be, I was. But before I explain, I suppose, Mr. Burchell, that *you* do not require an explanation. The place in which I met you is sufficient proof of the absurdity of what this person alleges.’

‘How so? I sat next to you at a public dinner. Any one could go who chose to buy a ticket. It does not require a great effort of the imagination to suppose it possible that one might light upon a doubtful character at such a function.’

I liked Mr. Burchell’s tone even less than his friend’s.

‘You scarcely state the case correctly. It was not by any means open to any one to buy a ticket. However, I will pass on to my explanation.’

‘We are waiting,’ murmured the stranger.

‘I was this morning at Scotland Yard.’

‘And they let you out again? I always said the English police were fools.’

‘Where I saw this pack of cards.’

‘And pinched it? Under the constable’s nose. The man’s a genius.’

‘No, sir, I did not, as you phrase it, pinch it, under the constable’s nose.’

‘Did he give it you?’

‘No, sir, nor did he give it me?’

‘Did he sell it you?’

‘He did not.’

‘How, then, does it come here?’

The stranger, thrusting his hands into his pockets, tilted his hat over his eyes.

‘That, unfortunately, is exactly what I am myself unable to understand.’

‘Hark at that! And that is what you call your explanation? Well, sir, you are the most promising disciple of the late Francis Farmer’s I have had the pleasure of meeting. You have what made him the man he was—his impudence.’

‘I pay no attention at this moment to this person’s insinua-

tions. After what has passed I insist on returning the moneys I have won.'

'That would be advisable. It will save us trouble afterwards.'

'Please to understand that I shall remain with you in this carriage until we reach Brighton. I shall then require you to accompany me to my residence. There I shall place before you ample proof that this person is an impudent traducer, and a bare-faced liar.'

'Softly at that. Let us wait for the adjectives still a little longer. There are one or two little points which you have forgotten in the excellent and copious explanation with which you have seen fit to favour us. Perhaps you will allow me to glance at the cards which you are holding in your hand?'

I gave him them.

'Here we have the ace, king, queen, four of clubs, and ace of diamonds. A nice little hand. Perhaps you will be so kind as to tell me how many cards there are in the remainder of that pack?'

Mr. Armitage, being thus appealed to, took up the pack of cards which was lying on the seat at my side, and having added his own hand, and Mr. Burchell's, proceeded to count them. He announced the result.

'There are forty-two cards here.'

'And five I hold make forty-seven. It is, perhaps, my ignorance, but I have always supposed that fifty-two constitute a pack of cards. Perhaps you will be able to tell us what has become of the other five?'

The inquiry was addressed to me.

'How should I know?'

'You have not got them, by the merest chance, in either of your pockets.'

'If you are not careful, you will go too far!'

'That would be a pity. I should think that, for you, I've gone far enough already. Perhaps it would not be too much trouble to feel, say, in the left-hand pocket of that elegant summer overcoat which you have on.'

'You impudent——'

I stopped short. Thrusting my hand into my left pocket, to my unutterable amazement, it lighted upon what unmistakably were cards. I drew them out. The stranger snatched them from me. He held them up in the air. 'Hey, presto—the missing five! I *thought* there might have been an accident. Now let us

see what cards they are. Ace, king, queen, and four of hearts, and ace of clubs—another pretty little hand! Perhaps, gentlemen, you commence to see how it is done.'

'I think I do,' said Mr. Armitage.

'I'm sure I do,' said Mr. Burchell.

'If—if you think that I put those cards in my pocket,' I began to stammer—Mr. Burchell interrupted me.

'Pray do not trouble to offer any wholly unnecessary explanations. Perhaps you will be so good as to return the money which you have won.'

He laid a wholly unmistakable accent upon 'won.'

'It is I who insist on that, sir, not you.'

'Pray do not let us quarrel as to phrases,' said Mr. Burchell, with a smile—a smile for which I could have strangled him. I counted out the moneys. Just as I had completed the act of restitution—restitution! To think that an honest man should have had to endure such humiliation! The train drew up at Red Hill Junction—it was scarcely more than three-quarters of an hour since we left Victoria. Mr. Burchell rose.

'I wish you good-day, Mr. Ranken.'

'A wish in which I join.' And Mr. Armitage rose too.

'You are not going?' I cried.

'But indeed we are.'

'Then I say that you shall do nothing of the kind. Do you think that I am going to allow you to place on me such a stigma without offering me an opportunity to prove my innocence?'

'If you dare to touch me, Mr. Ranken'—in my excitement I had grasped Mr. Burchell by the arm—'I shall summon an officer. As I am unwilling to appear as your accuser in a police-court, if you take my advice you will let me go.'

A police-court! In my amazement at being threatened with a policeman, I let them go. I sank back upon the seat, feeling as though I had been stunned. The train started. I still sat there. My faculties were so disorganised as to render me unable to realise my situation. To have had contemptuous compassion dealt out to me as though I were a swindler and a thief!

It was only when Red Hill had been left behind that I became conscious of the fact that I had not been left alone in the carriage. My accuser remained. He himself drew my attention to his presence.

'Well, how do you feel?'

I looked up. He had placed himself on the opposite seat,

right in front of me. I glared at him. He smiled. Had I obeyed the impulse of the moment I should have caught him by the throat and crushed the life right out of him. But I restrained my indignation.

'You—you villain!' He laughed; a curious, mirthless laugh. It was like adding fuel to the flame. 'Do you know what you have done? You have endeavoured to put a brand of shame upon a man who never, consciously, was guilty of a dishonourable action in his life.'

'Well, and how do you feel?'

'Feel! God forgive me, but I feel as though I should like to kill you.'

He put up his hand and stroked his beardless chin.

'Yes, that is how I used to feel, at first.'

'What do you mean?'

He leaned forward and looked me keenly in the face.

'Do you not know me?'

I paused before I answered. So far as my recollection went his face was strange to me. Still, my memory might err.

'Is it possible that we have met before? Can I have given you any—even the slightest cause, to do this thing?'

'You are right in your inference—I did it all. It was I who put the cards in your pocket.'

'You—you devil!'

This time my indignation *did* get the better of me. I sprang forward to seize him by the throat, but, with a dexterous movement, he eluded me. Missing my aim, I fell on my knees on the floor. Rising to his feet, he looked down at me, and smiled.

'Do you not know me now?'

'Know you!—No!'

'I am Francis Farmer.'

'Francis Farmer!'

'I am the guardian of the cards. Did not the constable tell you that where they were I was always close at hand?'

'But—Farmer's dead!'

'That is so. He's dead.'

Scrambling to my feet I caught hold, for support, of the railing which was intended for light luggage. What did he mean? Was the fellow, after all, some wandering lunatic, who should not have been suffered to be at large. He was standing at the other end of the carriage regarding me with his curiously mirthless smile. He did not *look* a lunatic; on the contrary, he

appeared to be a person of even unusual intelligence. He was very tall. He was dressed from head to foot in black, after the undertaker fashion which is so common in the United States. His cheeks were colourless, his eyes almost unnaturally bright. With those two exceptions there was nothing about him which was in any way uncommon, and even pale cheeks and flashing eyes are not phenomenal.

‘Still, I am Francis Farmer.’

His voice was not at all American—it was soft and gentle. Stooping, he picked up the pack of cards. He began, as it were, to fondle them with his hands.

‘My cards! My own, old cards! The tools which have so often won for me both bread and cheese! Is it strange that I should regard them almost as my own children, sir? That I should be careful where they are—to be always close at hand? I fashioned them with my own fingers. And so fine was the art I used, that skilled eyes have beheld them many and many a time, yet never perceived a flaw.’

‘Do I understand you to say, deliberately, that you are Francis Farmer?’

‘Indeed I am.’

‘Then, at the next station at which we stop I will give information to the police. So notorious a rogue cannot be allowed to be at large.’

‘But Francis Farmer’s dead.’

‘He was supposed to be. You are not the first rogue who has feigned to be dead.’

‘But, in truth, he’s dead. They sat upon his corpse. They brought it in that he’d been guilty of *felo de se*. And, since no one came to claim his body, they buried him at Portland, among his brother rogues; and there he lies, within hearing of the sea. Permit me to show you the place where the rope was about his neck, and where he thrust the knife into his breast.’

Tearing his waistcoat open he advanced towards me, as if to show me the hall-marks of the suicide. I waved him back again.

‘Do not think to fool me with such tricks!’

He paused, and eyed me—always with his curious smile.

‘You are a shrewd man. I perceived it when I saw you at Scotland Yard.’

‘You saw me at Scotland Yard!’

‘Where else? I was with you in the Museum, when you were

seeing all the sights. And when the constable took out the cards—my cards! I perceived that you were a man after my own heart. So when the superstitious fellow—you remember, he was a little superstitious, was he not?—put them back into their place, I took the liberty to borrow them—why not? They were my own, the works of my own hand!—and I went with you down the stairs.'

'You went with me down the stairs!'

'And along the Strand, to Simpson's. I sat beside you as you lunched—you did not see me. It was not strange. Permit me but one word—you are too fond of beef! It was a meat which, in my hungriest days, I never loved. When you had lunched, I slipped my arm through yours—'

'You slipped your arm through mine!'

'But indeed I did, and at the same moment I slipped my cards into the pocket of your overcoat. For I liked you, although for your beef I had a constitutional disrelish.'

I had a constitutional disrelish for the style of conversation which he appeared to favour. As I listened to him talking in that cold-blooded way, of what, to say the least of it, were absolute impossibilities, I began to be conscious of a fit of shivering, as though I had plunged, unawares, into a bath of ice-cold water.

'You—you don't expect me to believe these fairy tales?'

'I went with you to the station; then, when the train was starting, I thought it time I should appear. So I appeared. I resolved that you should win, say, sixty pounds, and then—I would expose you.'

'Expose me! Good heavens, man or demon—why?'

'Because I hoped to find in you a worthy successor to my fame.'

I stared at him aghast. What *could* he mean?

'Do you—do you mean that you hoped to find in me the making of a thief?'

'Such words are hard. I hoped to find in you an artist, my dear sir.'

'You consummate scoundrel! Man or demon, I shall be very much tempted, in half a minute, to throw you through the carriage window.'

'Try it.' The fellow stood upright, his arms to his sides. There was no appearance of bravado in his tone. He seemed completely at his ease. 'Touch me! Grasp me, if you can!'

I took up his challenge on the instant. But scarcely had I advanced a step than I was seized with a sickening faintness, so that I was compelled to take refuge on the seat. He stood and watched me for a moment. Then he came and touched me. His touch was real enough, but I shrank from it with a sense of loathing which I am powerless to put into words.

'See, I am quite real.' Strangely enough, it was then that, for the first time, I doubted it. 'It is only when I wish it that I am a thing of air.' Bending over, he fixed his bright eyes upon my face. His glance had on me that paralysing effect which is popularly supposed to be an attitude of certain members of the serpent tribe. 'Let me teach you the secret of my cards?'

He held the pack in front of me—I knew he held it, although for the life of me I could not have removed my eyes from off his face. So we remained in silence for some moments. Then he went on, his tone seeming to steal like some stupefying poison into my veins.

'This is a great day for me. It is a day I have looked forward to ever since I—died. It was not an heroic death. To stab oneself with a common warder's common knife, to hang oneself with a prison sheet from the bar of a broken window. One would not choose a death like that. And yet, if die one must, what matters it *how* one dies? And time has its revenges! All things come to those who wait—at last! at last! After many days I've found a friend.'

I tried to breathe. I could not. Something seemed to choke me. I was overcome by a great weight of horror and disgust. It seemed to stifle me.

'Do you know where we are sitting, you and I? This carriage is an old familiar friend. It was here I shot John Osborn.'

'What!'

The sense of loathing, even the sense of fear, with which I heard him make, so callously, this hideous confession, gave me strength to snap the spell with which he had seemed to bind me to the seat. I sprang from him with a cry. He was not in the least disturbed.

'Yes, it was in this very carriage. Some strange fate has led us hither. See, he was seated there.' He pointed to the corner of the carriage which was behind my back. Turning, I glanced over my shoulder with an irrepressible shudder. 'I almost think I see him now. Ah, John Osborn, where's your ghost? Would it not be a strange encounter were we ghosts to meet? He was

seated there. I was seated just in front of him, behind you on the other side. There were four other men with us in the carriage. I think I see them. Would that all we ghosts were met again so that we might react the scene before your eyes! I had won—ah! what a sum I'd won. John Osborn's temper was a little warped. He had said a nasty thing or two. He did not like to lose. I made an awkward pass with an ace of clubs. He caught me by the wrist, crying, "Got you, you thief!" I looked round the carriage. I saw that the others were on his side. They all had lost, you see. I replied, "Release my wrist." "Not," he said, "till you show me that card!" "Take it!" I cried, and flung it in his face. I have not so sweet a temper as you, my friend. As I flung the card into his face, with my other hand I drew a revolver, which it was my custom to carry, so that any little difficulties which might arise might be settled without any unnecessary delay. I fired at John Osborn. Some one struck up my wrist. I missed. I fired again. That time the shot went home. It burst his eye. I flattered myself that it had entered into what he called his brain. He gave just one gasp, and dropped. I fancy that I hear him gasping now. It seemed as though the passage of his throat was choked with blood. There was a fight. They all went for me. I emptied all the chambers of my revolver. And then—then I was done.'

He paused, and smiled. I was cowering at the other end of the carriage. Close to the spot on which, according to his account, this hideous tragedy had happened. And the chief actor was standing there in front of me, bringing back the scene so that it all seemed to be happening before my very eyes. A wild desire flashed across my mind that an accident would happen, or that the train would go off the line, so that in some way I might escape this man.

'I have often wondered where that first bullet went with which I missed. I was seated there. My wrist was struck up—so! I never heard that it was found. It was not produced against me at the trial. It must have gone in this direction. Let us see.'

He began at a particular place to prod the cushioned back of the seat with the fingers of his right hand. I watched, as a man might be supposed to watch, with his mental eye, the horrors of a nightmare. At last he gave an exclamation. 'Ah! What have we here?'

Actually, with his finger nails, he commenced to pick a hole

in the cushion. What an officer of the railway company would have thought of his proceedings is more than I can say. I could but look on. With diabolical dexterity he tore a hole in the cushion, and into this hole he inserted his finger and thumb. With these he groped about inside. When he withdrew them he held them up.

'You see, my friend, that it is found. The missing bullet! It is a little shapeless, but I know it well.' He pressed it to his lips. He advanced to me. 'The first shot which I fired at John Osborn. Take it and keep it, my friend, in memory of me.'

It was a nice keepsake to offer to a friend. Conceive a notorious murderer returning to these shades and offering you, as a token of his regard and continuing esteem, the hatchet, say, with which the deed was done.

'No,' I gasped; 'not I.'

'Let me entreat you, my dear friend.'

He pressed it on me, as though it were a gift of priceless worth.

'I won't.'

'Consider the interest which attaches to this thing. It is not much to look at, but a little lump of shapeless lead; but consider the scene on which it figured, O my friend. It *might* have burst John Osborn's eye—I almost think it grazed his head.'

The train was slackening. Thank the powers! I thrust my arm through the window of the carriage, intending to grasp the handle of the door. Was I to have this reeking relic *forced* on me by a ghost? He misunderstood my meaning.

'Is it suicide you seek?'

'It—it's escape from you!'

'Then let us go together.'

'How are we to go together if I am to get away from you?'

'Ah, my friend, but that you cannot do.'

'Cannot! I at least can try.'

'Remove your grasp from the handle of that door or I swear that I will not leave you, never, for an instant, night or day, till you, like me, are dead.'

He did not raise his tones; but his eyes were strangely bright. Thank heaven, the train was slackening fast. In a few moments we should reach a station. Then,—then we should see! He read my thoughts,

'You think to escape me when we reach the station. Bah, my friend, I shall disappear, but to return again!'

Still—we should see!

The train stopped. The platform was on the opposite side. I made a movement towards the other door. He stood in the way. Unmistakably *then* he was flesh and blood enough. I could not pass unless I forced him to one side. In my rage I grappled him. In an instant a struggle would have undoubtedly ensued. But in the very nick of time the opposite door was opened. Other passengers came in.

'Thank God!' I cried. 'Some one has come at last.'

I turned to see who the newcomers were. They were Messrs. Burchell and Armitage. In my surprise I lost my presence of mind again. The stranger stood like a figure of Mephistopheles, and smiled at me. He addressed himself to my late antagonists.

'Well, gentlemen, have you decided to make it a case for the police. I think, if you will take the advice of an unprejudiced onlooker, you would be wise if you did.'

This insolence was more than I could stand.

'Gentlemen,' I cried, 'this—this demon has confessed to me that it was he who did it all.'

I looked at Mr. Burchell and his friend. They met my troubled glances with what seemed, in my confusion, to be a meaningless stare. The stranger still continued to regard me with his careless smile.

'I am afraid,' he murmured, 'that you're an old, old hand.'

What was I to say? How was I to refute his calumnies?

'Gentlemen, you will understand what sort of character this person is, when I tell you that he informs me he's a ghost.'

'A ghost!'

The exclamation came from Burchell I was sure.

'Yes, a ghost. He tells me that he is Francis Farmer.'

'Not Francis Farmer.' The stranger touched me on the arm.

'You said that you were Francis Farmer.'

'But Francis Farmer's ghost. The difference is essential. You will do me the favour to admit that I stated that I was Francis Farmer's ghost. I was prepared to show you where the rope was passed about my throat and the exact spot where the knife was thrust into my breast.'

Was he in jest? His manner was all the time so calm that it was difficult to tell if he was in jest or earnest.

'If you're not a ghost then you're a raving lunatic.'

'If I'm not a ghost.'

He stood close in front of me, wagging his forefinger in my face. There was silence. For my part, I knew neither what to do nor say. At last, taking out my handkerchief, with it I wiped the perspiration from my brow.

'I think *I'm* going mad.'

As I uttered these words in a tone which, I do not doubt, sufficiently suggested the confusion which was paralysing my mental faculties, there came a sound, very like a titter, from the other end of the carriage. I turned. Mr. Armitage was laughing. At first it seemed that he was endeavouring to restrain his mirth, but, as I continued to stare, it gathered force until it became a veritable roar. His example was contagious. Suddenly Mr. Burchell burst into peals of merriment. And directly he began the Mephistophelian stranger, bending double, sank back upon the seat and indulged in laughter to such an immoderate extent that I really thought that there was imminent danger that he would crack his sides. As I gazed at this amazing spectacle I daresay that, from one point of view, which was not mine, the expression of my face was comical enough. Was *I* going off my head? Or had fate destined me to journey down to Brighton in the society of lunatics?

'Oh, man!' gasped Mr. Burchell, between his bursts of laughter, '*don't* look like that, or I shall die!'

I endeavoured, doubtless quite ineffectually, to assume an imposing attitude.

'Perhaps, gentlemen, when you have *quite* finished, you will condescend to favour me with an explanation of this extraordinary scene.'

'If I'm not a ghost!' screamed the Mephistophelian stranger. And off they all went again.

'There may be something comical in the present situation, and perhaps it is owing to some constitutional defect that I altogether fail to see it—but I don't!'

'Oh, man!' Mr. Burchell gasped again; '*don't* talk like that, or you will kill me.' All at once he rose and clapped me on the shoulder. 'Why, don't you see, it's all a joke!'

'A joke!'

I stared at him. Could he be joking?

'Yes, a practical joke, my boy!'

'A practical joke!' I fancy that I was the colour of a boiled beetroot. 'Perhaps, Mr. Burchell, you will explain what you mean by a practical joke.'

'Why, we three were outside the door when the bobby was showing you the things at the Yard, and we heard him pitch the yarn about Francis Farmer and his cards, and how they were haunted, and all the rest of it, so we thought we'd have a game with you.'

'A game with me? Still I fail to understand.'

'I'm a clerk at the Yard, you know.'

'Excuse me, but I do not know that you're a clerk at the Yard.'

'Well, I am, in the Criminal Investigation Department. Of course they know me, and directly you went out I walked in as bold as brass and collared the cards.' I remembered that some one *had* gone in as we came out. 'I arranged that Bateman—this is Bateman'—he jerked his thumb towards the Mephistophelian stranger; that individual raised his hat, possibly to acknowledge the introduction—'should shadow you. He was to play the ghost. We had heard you tell the bobby that you were going down to Brighton by the 2.30 from Victoria, so we agreed that we would all go down together—this happening to be an afternoon on which the exigencies of the public service were not too pressing. We found you at the station, standing outside the carriage-door. As I brushed past you on one side I slipped forty-seven cards into one pocket of your overcoat, and as Armitage brushed past you on the other side he slipped five cards into the other. I am a bit of a conjuror, and Armitage is a dab at all that kind of thing; so between us we manipulated the cards so that you were forced to win. And you won!—sixty pounds!—until the exposure came off in style. I say, old man, how did the ghost go off?'

The versatile Mr. Burchell turned to Mr. Bateman. For my part, not for the first time on that occasion, I felt too bewildered to speak. The modest Mr. Bateman smoothed his chin.

'I am afraid that for details of the ghost I must refer you to Mr. Ranken. But I *may* mention that I discovered that this was the actual carriage in which the tragedy took place, and that there was a memorial of the victim's fate on the back of one of the cards. I also lighted on the identical bullet which *almost* did the deed. What the railway company will say about the damage to their cushion is more than I can guess. It may turn out to be a matter of a couple of pounds.'

'Mr. Burchell,' I spluttered—I was reduced to such a condition that spluttering was all that I was fit for—'I have only one thing

to say to you, since your idea of what constitutes a joke seems to be so radically different to mine, and that is to remind you that you have been guilty of this extraordinary behaviour towards an entire stranger.'

'Not an *entire* stranger!

'Yes, sir, an entire stranger!'

'But henceforward one whom I hope to be allowed to call a friend.'

He had the assurance to offer me, with an insinuating smile, his hand. I put my hands behind my back.

'There is one other point, Mr. Burchell. I won from you and your friend nearly sixty pounds. I returned it to you on an imputation being made of cheating. I presume that imputation is now withdrawn!'

'Of course. It was only a joke.'

'In that case I must request you to repay me the amount I won!'

The fellow looked a little blank.

'Isn't it rather a curious case?'

'It is exactly on that account that I insist on your refunding what you obtained from me by means of what looks very like a subterfuge. I intend to present the amount, as a memorial of what you very rightly call a curious case, to the Home for Lost Dogs.'

'A joke may be made a little expensive,' murmured Mr. Burchell, as he counted out the coin.

'And the laugh, after all, be on the other side,' said Mr. Armitage.

'The laugh,' I answered, as I received my winnings, 'is with the curs.'

RICHARD MARSH.

Star-gazing.

FROM time to time much is heard of the difficulties and hardships that an ardent star-gazer has to bear in using his telescope, and no doubt the work is often dry and the circumstances trying; but at other times there are compensating benefits, and the circumstances under which star-gazing can be done have a peculiar charm of their own. In the silence of the night, with the roof open to the sky, and with a telescope as one's sole companion, strange, marvellous stories come to us from the star-depths brought by that mysterious messenger which we call Light. We think, the first time a message was cabled across the Atlantic, the receiver of that message must have had a strange sensation of wonder; but how much more strange is it to receive a message that started—not from a few thousand miles away a few moments ago—but that started from unthinkable space long before we were born; and it is the telescope that does the most in making that message plain.

How humbly, then, would one stand aside could a telescope but find a voice, and listen with reverence to the revelations of its visions! One *almost* admires the incredulity of that contemporary of Galileo who refused to put his eye to the instrument that would have shown him the moons of Jupiter. Before familiarity had bred indifference, men thought the alleged doings of even early telescopes too wonderful for human power to achieve.

One *wholly* admires the discoveries of Galileo, and feels with him in the discouragement and disappointments that he met. It was not unnatural for him to remark of this same sceptic: 'I hope he saw the moons of Jupiter while on his way to heaven.'

How much there is that the telescope reveals, and how wonderful are its revelations!

There are those shapeless spots of hazy light which we call nebulae—vast suns most likely not yet formed, new worlds and systems not yet come forth from chaos.

Star clusters, too, that crowd the field of the telescope with countless points of light, each point a sun; and so the vision of a thousand worlds is found within the limits of one human eye.

There is the Milky Way, that the myth of the Lithuanians calls the road of the birds, because the winged spirits of the blest flit along it to the free and happy land—the road (as our English fathers had it) by which the hero sons of Wætla marched across the sky; and (Mr. Green reminds us) ‘poetry only hardened into prose when they transferred the name of Watling Street from Britain to the sky;’ and in strange contrast, yet harmony, with this, the Milky Way was the chief material for Herschel’s daring speculation about the architecture of the universe itself.

There are those multiple and coloured stars that speak to us of worlds lit up by two or more coloured suns, whose rays, mingling and alternating, must produce most gorgeous phenomena.

Or, coming to our nearer neighbours, there is Neptune, with the story of its discovery by Adams and Leverrier, a story romantic among romances, yet the immediate outcome of rigid unromantic mathematics; but perhaps most charming object of all is the planet Saturn, surrounded by rings and attended by satellites. ‘The golden disc faintly striped with silver-tinted belts, the circling rings with their various shades of brilliancy and colour, and the perfect symmetry of the system as it sweeps across the dark background of the field of view combining to form a picture as charming as it is sublime and impressive.’¹ The rings are by far the most interesting features of Saturn’s system, and were the cause of much perplexity to Galileo. Knowing nothing of their nature, and seeing Saturn first as ‘a big ball with a little ball on each side,’ as it was once described to me, and eighteen months afterwards finding no trace of any appendages, he was utterly confused and perplexed, and it is said that he almost seems to have thought that his telescope had deceived him, and that his enemies were right when they said that his discoveries were illusions caused by mocking demons. It is said also that Galileo never looked at Saturn again.

Succeeding years established the fact that changes in Saturn’s appearance took place. One astronomer tried to forward knowledge by announcing that Saturn ‘presents five various figures to the observer, to wit, first, the mono-spherical; secondly, the tri-spherical; thirdly, the spherico-ansated; fourthly, the elliptico-

¹ Proctor’s *Saturn*, chap. iii.

ansated; fifthly and finally, the spherico-cuspidated,' which somehow is suggestive of Dogberry, and leads one to remark with Mr. Gilbert that 'no doubt it's very clever, but I don't know what it means.'

It is not wholly useless to call to mind feeble efforts after truth, even when, as in this case, perplexity seeks to hide itself behind long words.

I dare say the readers of the sentence just quoted thought it a good deal more sensible than a combination of letters forming no words, and with no explanation of them, that Huyghens printed at the end of a pamphlet; yet, transposed, these letters announced the discovery, made with a telescope 41 yards long, that Saturn was girdled by a thin plane ring nowhere touching the planet.

When the existence of the rings was established guesses were made as to their constitution, and the quaint idea was put forward in early times that an unfortunate comet had come too near to Saturn and got its tail wound round, so forming the rings with his mangled remains, suggestive somewhat of a whiting being caught and cooked, and its tail stuck in its mouth to make a ring. The thickness of the rings is estimated at about 100 miles, an extreme thinness which is well shown when the rings are edge-ways to us, and the satellites are sometimes seen on the edge, 'like pearls strung on a silver thread,' as they seemed to Herschel.

So great is the strain put upon the rings by the attractive force of the planet that, were they solid rings of steel 100 miles in thickness, they would be but as sheets of tissue paper fluttering in the breeze.

Thus the theory of a solid formation had to be abandoned, and the fluid theory fared no better, for it was shown that the disturbing influences to which the rings are subject must lead to the formation of waves which would speedily break up the fluid rings into fluid satellites.

The theory that is left is that the rings are clouds of unconnected satellites, too small and too closely packed to be separately discerned, while the dark inside ring, called the crape ring, is thought by some to be of a similar nature, with the particles more sparsely scattered.

But the most startling point in connection with the rings is undeniable evidence of change. Not only is the crape ring much more noticeable than formerly, but it appears to be continually growing in distinctness and in width, and the bright rings are increasing in width, their extension being chiefly, if not wholly,

inwards, so lessening the space between the rings and the planet.

Had we perfect knowledge, there could be no room for surprise ; were we entirely ignorant, there could be no ground for wonder ; but being, as we are, partially informed, these changes are full of startling significance.

We cannot but ask if the rings of Saturn are a finished structure, destined always to remain as they are, or if they show us some part of a slow process by which all that now is has evolved from earlier stages. Only one reply seems possible ; everywhere around us are signs and evidence of change ; from man downwards through the realms of life to the matter of the earth everything is seeking rest and finding none.

The course of the universe and all its parts is aptly symbolised by the pendulum with its constant swing. Mutability is the order of nature, and immutability—changelessness—is not progress, but death.

One night, when the old year was drawing to an end, I was sitting alone with my telescope, watching Saturn and its system pass again and again across the field of view. Close to it was the moon, just past its full—so close that with one eye I watched it, and at the same time saw Saturn through the telescope magnified to the size of the moon. As I watched, the clocks struck the last hour of the old year, and the bells from all around chimed out their welcome to the new ; the thoughts of many doubtless were dwelling on changes that had been and changes that might be to come, and, joining my mood to theirs, I, too, thought of change.

Leaning back and gazing upwards, I felt rather than saw the wonders of the heavens above, and mused rather than thought of that great guess Laplace and Kant and Spencer made about the cradle and the grave of Nature.

Here was Saturn, a world in process of formation, vast in size and wonderful to view ; here, too, was the moon, once, perhaps, a ring circling the earth, somewhat as the rings of Saturn girdle it, but long since concentrated to its present form, and now a worn, dead world, beautiful because of its reflected sunlight, and large because so near. Close by was the splendid constellation of Orion, in which is the most remarkable of the nebulae at which I had been looking an hour or so before, wondering how that 'unformed fiery mist, the chaotic material of future worlds,' would appear to astronomers of the distant future, when maybe it had passed through many changes, forming suns and systems comparable in

glory to Betelgeuze and Rigel, and the other shining splendours of Orion. Such reflection overshadows the student of Nature with a strange awe. 'Breaking contact with the hampering details of earth, it associates him with a Power which gives fulness and tone to his existence, but which he can neither analyse nor comprehend.'¹

The nebula in Orion, Saturn, and the moon are indeed suggestive of change—types, they may be called, of the first stage, the middle, and the last that matter passes through in the long process of the evolution of worlds.

And, of all changes, that change has most interest for us which affects our own planet, the earth; it has reached a later stage than Saturn, though not so late a stage as the moon; but only in long ages and by minute effects will further changes be noticed.

Ages hence it may be discovered that there is some slight change in the earth's orbit; or Mercury, yet nearer to the sun than we, may be seen to pursue a smaller orbit than now, and the terrible fact may come home to man that we are drawing nearer to the sun. Time goes on, and the tropics become too hot for existence, and colder regions find a welcome change to warmth.

Age by age goes by, and the end is, visibly, no nearer; but the figures of astronomers only too surely tell their tale.

Now the tropics are an impassable desert, and all the life on the globe congregates around the poles; Spain has lost her vineyards, and the Alps their snow; England is a burning desert, and Greenland teems with the vegetation of the tropics; in smaller and smaller circles the inhabitants gather round the poles. 'But,' to quote the words of Mr. Keighley Miller, 'the narrowed limits of the habitable earth can no longer support this vast increase of population, and famine begins to mow down its victims by millions. Now, indeed, the end of all life on the earth draws on apace. . . . The heat and drought become more and more insupportable; rain and dew fall no longer. All springs of water fail, and the rivers dwindle down to streamlets, and trickle slowly over their stony beds; and now scarcity of water is added to scarcity of food. Those who escape from the famine perish by the drought, and those who escape from the drought are reserved for a fate more awful yet. For a time the few remaining inhabitants are partially screened from the overwhelming power of the sun by a dense canopy of clouds,' formed by the evaporation of every lake and sea.

'But soon the sun scorches up these vapour banks, and

¹ Tyndall.

dissipates them into space as fast as they can form. Then the fiery orb shines out in unutterable splendour without the lightest cloud wreath to interpose between himself and his victims. Then the last denizens of the world are stricken down and consumed; the last traces of organic life are blotted from its surface.

'Then the last drops of ocean are dried up, and nothing of the earth is left but a bare and blighted rock. Still the doomed planet rushes on to its awful fate. Swiftly, and more swiftly, it circles round the sun—like the bark which, once drawn within the influence of the whirlpool, is sucked irresistibly into its fearful vortex. At last it seems to get paralysed by the iron grasp that is tightening upon it; it staggers, pauses for a moment in its headlong career, and, thus checked in its onward progress, the sun draws it straight down to itself. A hurried rush through the tossing sea of fire; a swift plunge through the cloudy stratum behind, and the earth sinks to its eternal resting place on the face of its parent globe.'¹ And then? When each planet has in turn sunk to rest upon the sun, are there yet further changes after that?

May it not be thought that, as the stars are known to move, and as their movement must be caused by gravitation, changes in their relative conditions are continually taking place, and that what happens in the field of the microscope, what happens in everything we see around, what happens in our solar system, happens also in that vast system of stars which is almost beyond our ken?

That which we perceive to happen continually is concentration, alternating with diffusion; evolution and dissolution predominating turn by turn. Not lightly did I say that the course of the universe, and all its parts, is aptly symbolised by the pendulum with its constant swing; not lightly dare we say that the course of nature elsewhere is other than we see it here. Just as the astronomer, noticing a few places of a moving body, can calculate the curve of its orbit, so here we trace the curve of nature's path, and with reason do we project that curve from the known into the unknown.

There are three points of that curve which are of supreme importance: they are these:—

1. Every particle of matter attracts every other particle.
2. Matter is indestructible.
3. Force is indestructible.

¹ *Romance of Astronomy.*

What is the possible result of the continuance of these principles?

We are led to expect that the matter of the sidereal system, as of the solar system, tends to concentration; we believe that the matter, and the force that it contains, can neither lessen nor increase; we know that the collision of vast bodies proceeding from immense distances at inconceivable velocities requires the expenditure of an amount of force which, at the moment of collision, would change to heat, sufficient, not merely to warm or to liquefy, but to render gaseous—nebulous—the colliding bodies; and as we can trace the evolution of the solid bodies that we know from a nebulous condition, so do we in thought trace them onwards to a dissolution into nebula again.

Apparently, then, the forces of nature which produce a rhythmic, pendulous order in minor changes also necessitate the same rhythm in the totality of its changes—alternate eras of evolution and dissolution.

‘Thus there is suggested the conception of a past during which there have been successive evolutions analogous to that which is now going on; and a future during which successive other such evolutions may go on—ever the same in principle, but never the same in concrete result.’¹

If we ask whence came the nebulae, we can but answer that we do not know; and if succeeding generations discover some pre-nebulous condition of the universe, yet they also would but be in the same fundamental position as ourselves.

Time was when I smiled at that old myth which says the earth is resting on a tortoise, which rests upon an elephant, *whose legs reach all the way down*; but now I see in it an old-world symbol of the profoundest of truths—the truth, namely, that by every avenue of thought we reach only to a mystery at last.

WILLIAM SCHOOLING.

*The Shratt.*¹

ONCE upon a time a young farmer's whole harvest had failed, his hay was spoiled, and his cattle had died, so that he could not even do the work due to his landlord. One Sunday he was sitting sorrowfully at his door as the people passed by to church. There came up to him one Michael, an old tramp, of whom it was said that he could suck the cows dry, call down hail on the crops, and bring disease on men. Thanks to this reputation, he was never sent away empty-handed when he came begging.

'Good day, farmer!' said he, as he came up.

'Good luck to you!' was the answer.

'What's the matter with you?' asked the old man. 'You look miserable.'

'Yes, things are going ill with me. But, at least, I am glad to meet you. Folks say you can do a lot of mischief, but that you are a clever man. Perhaps you could help me?'

'Folks think me bad because they are bad themselves,' replied the old man. 'But what has happened to you?'

The farmer told him all his misfortunes, and the old man said: 'Would you like to escape from your present poverty, and become a rich man at once?'

'I wish with all my heart I could,' cried the farmer.

Then old Michael laughed and said: 'If I were as young and strong as you, if I were brave, and not afraid of the dark, and if I knew how to hold my tongue—well, I know what I'd do.'

'Tell me what you mean. I'll do anything to get rich, for, as things are, my life is a burden to me.'

Then the old man looked cautiously round about him, and said softly: 'Do you know what a Shratt is?'

The farmer answered in horror: 'I don't *know*, but I have heard dreadful things.'

¹ The following is an Esthonian tale, rendered here from the German, which, it is believed, has not been given before in English.

‘I’ll tell you then. It is a creature that any man can make for himself, but it must be done so secretly that no human being sees him. Its body is a broomstick, its head a broken jug, its nose a piece of glass, and its arms two distaffs with which a woman a hundred years old has spun. All these things are easily got. On three Thursday evenings you must go all alone to a cross-road, set your goblin upright, and say the words I will teach you. On the third Thursday the goblin will come to life.’

‘Heaven deliver us from evil!’ cried the farmer.

‘Oh, you’re afraid? Then I’ve said too much already.’

‘No, I’m not afraid; go on.’

The old man went on: ‘This goblin is then the servant of him who has brought it to life at the cross-road. It lives in his house, in the garret, and must do whatever he bids it. No one can see it but its master. It brings him money, corn, and hay as often as he likes, but not more at once than one man can carry.’

‘But, if you know all that, why have you never made one of these admirable treasure-bringers for yourself, instead of remaining a poor man all your life?’

‘I have made up my mind to do it a hundred times, and I’ve begun to do it a hundred times, but my courage always failed. A friend of mine, who had one, used often to talk to me about it, but I was too timid to follow his example. My friend died, and his masterless goblin lived a long time in the village here, and played the people many a trick. Once he tore a woman’s yarn all to pieces, and when they found it out, and were going to throw the yarn away, behold there lay a heap of gold under it. After that the goblin disappeared. At that time there was nothing I wished so much as to have a goblin of my own; but now I am old and grey, and don’t think of such things.’

‘I have courage enough,’ said the farmer; ‘but wouldn’t it be better to talk it over with the minister first?’

‘You fool! You mustn’t talk it over with any one, but least of all with the minister, for, when you call the goblin to life, you make over your soul to the devil.’

The farmer started back in horror.

‘Don’t be so frightened,’ said the old man; ‘to make up for it, you will have a long life and everything heart could wish. And when you feel that your last hour is near, you may still escape from the claws of Satan if you are clever enough to get rid of your goblin.’

‘How can I do that?’

‘If you set him a task he can’t perform you are quit of him. But you must set about it cleverly, for it’s not easy to get the better of him. The man I told you of wanted to get rid of his goblin, so he set him to fill a cask with water carried in a sieve. But the goblin carried water, and carried water, and never stopped till he had filled the cask with the drops that clung to the sieve.’

‘Then he died without getting rid of the goblin?’

‘Well, why was he so stupid? But one thing I must tell you: you must feed your goblin well, to keep him in good humour. A farmer once put a plate of broth in the attic for his goblin, as he had always been accustomed to do. A servant noticed it, ate the broth, and put sand in the plate. That night the goblin beat the farmer cruelly; so he did every night till the farmer found out the cause, and carried up a fresh plate of broth. Then he let him alone. And now you know all about it.’

The farmer was silent. By-and-by he began: ‘There is a good deal about it that I don’t like, Michael.’

‘You asked my advice, and I’ve given it,’ said the old man. ‘Choose for yourself. Poverty and want have come upon you; this is the only way to escape them and become a rich man, and if you use your wits, you’ll be able to cheat the devil of your soul besides.’

The farmer thought a little, then said: ‘Tell me what I am to say on the Thursdays.’

‘What will you give me for it?’ asked the old man.

‘Once I’ve got the goblin, you shall lead the life of a lord.’

‘Come on then!’ said the old man; and they went into the cottage together.

After that Sunday the farmer was never to be seen in the village. He neglected his field-work, and his crop, such as it was, was spoiled. His house looked desolate and forsaken. His servant dawdled from tavern to tavern, and his maid lay at home and slept, now that the master was not there to see to the work himself.

Meantime the farmer sat in his smoky room, with the door bolted and the window-curtains drawn, working diligently day and night at his goblin by the light of a pine-torch. He had got together all that was needed for it, including even the distaffs with which an old woman a hundred years old had spun. He put all the pieces carefully together, set the jug on the broomstick, fastened on a bit of broken glass for a nose, and painted the eyes and mouth with red paint. Then he wrapped the body in coloured rags, as he had been told to do; and all the time he thought with horror that

now he had the power to call this uncanny creature to life, and that he should have to keep it beside him all his days. But when he remembered the riches it was to bring, his abhorrence vanished. The goblin was soon finished, and next Thursday, after dark, the farmer carried it to a cross-road in the forest. There he set his goblin upright, sat down on a stone, and watched it. But every time he looked at it he almost fainted with terror. Every puff of wind went through his very marrow, and when an owl hooted in the distance he thought he already heard the goblin groaning, and his blood froze in his veins. When day broke at last, he took the goblin and stole cautiously home.

The second Thursday he did just the same. At last the third Thursday night came, and now the charm was to take effect. The wind howled and the moon was hidden behind thick clouds, when the farmer, at dead of night, reached the cross-road with his goblin. He set it upright as before, but thought as he did so: 'Suppose I were to break it in a thousand pieces, go home, and work hard and steadily, I need have nothing to do with the powers of evil.'

'But I am miserably poor,' he answered himself, 'and this creature will make me rich. Come what may, things can't be worse with me.'

He looked round anxiously, turned trembling to the goblin, dropped three drops of blood from his finger upon it, and said the charm which the old man had taught him.¹

Suddenly the moon came out from behind the clouds, and shone down on the place where the farmer was standing before his goblin. The farmer was petrified with horror when he saw the goblin coming to life. The creature rolled his eyes horribly, turned slowly round and round, and when he again came face to face with his master, asked in a creaking voice: 'What do you want?'

This was too much for the farmer, who was already half-mad with fear. He fled as if for his life, not caring whither. The goblin ran, rattling and gasping, after him, and kept crying: 'Why did you bring me to life if you are to forsake me now?'

But the farmer ran on, and never looked behind.

Then the goblin seized his shoulder in his wooden grasp, and cried: 'You have failed in your bargain by running away. You have pledged yourself to the devil, and now you'll gain nothing by it. You have set me free, I am no longer your servant, but I will be your tormentor, and plague you to the last hour of your life.'

¹ In another tale the words of the charm are given: 'May my soul and thy soul be one.'

The farmer rushed madly into his cottage, but the goblin, invisible to all but him, followed.

From that day forth the farmer failed in whatever he undertook. Nothing but weeds grew in his fields, his cattle always died, his roofs fell in, and when he took hold of anything it broke in his hands. Neither man nor maid would enter his service, and at last every one held aloof from him, as though he were an evil spirit, bringing ill-luck wherever it appears.

Harvest had come round again, and the farmer was a mere shadow of himself, when one day he met old Michael. The old man greeted him, and looked mockingly in his face.

'Oh, it's you!' cried the farmer. 'I'm glad to have fallen in with you, you hell-hound! Where are your promises, your riches and good fortune? I have sold myself to the devil, and I'm in hell already. And it's all your fault.'

'Softly, softly,' said the old man. 'Who bade you play with the powers of evil if you were afraid? I warned you earnestly. But at the last moment you slunk away like a coward, and thereby freed the goblin from his service. If you hadn't done that, you would have been a rich and happy man, as I foretold.'

'But you never saw the awful face of the goblin coming to life,' said the farmer, shuddering. 'Oh, fool that I was, to let myself be led astray by you!'

'I didn't lead you astray; I only told you what I knew.'

'Then help me now.'

'Help yourself; I can do nothing. I have more reason to complain of you than you of me. I didn't defraud you, but where is the provision for my old age that you promised? You are the cheat, not I.'

'Well, never mind that now. Show me how to escape; tell me what to do. I will do whatever you bid me.'

'No,' said the old man: 'I know no more. I must remain a beggar, and it is your fault.' With these words he turned and left him.

'Curse you!' cried the farmer, whose last hope had vanished. 'Is there no way of escape?' he asked himself. 'This goblin, who holds on to me like the devil himself, is, after all, nothing but my own work—a thing of wood and potsherds. It must be possible to destroy him if I go the right way to work.'

He hastened to his cottage, where he now lived all alone. There stood the goblin in a corner. He received him with an angry grin, and said:

'Where is my supper?'

'What will you take to go away and leave me in peace?'

'Where's my supper? Give me my supper quick; I'm hungry.'

'Just wait. I'll give it you directly.'

The farmer seized a pine-torch which was burning in the chimney-corner, rushed out like a madman, and locked all the doors from outside.

It was a cold autumn night, and the wind blowing through the pines sounded like strange wailing voices.

'Now burn and roast, you devil from hell!' cried the farmer, throwing the burning torch on to the thatched roof, so that the whole cottage was soon in a blaze. Then the farmer laughed madly, and kept crying: 'Now burn and roast!'

The villagers were soon wakened by the glow of the flames, and flocked to the scene of the disaster. They wanted to put out the fire and save what they could, but the farmer thrust them back, saying:

'Let alone! What do I care about the house if only *he* perishes? He has tormented me long enough, now it's my turn to torture him, and then things may come right again.'

The people stared at him in amazement. Then the house fell in with a crash, and the farmer cried loudly:

'Now he's burnt!'

At that moment the goblin, visible to the farmer alone, rose unhurt from the smoking ruins, with a threatening gesture. The moment the farmer saw him, he fell to the ground with a dreadful cry.

'What do you see?' asked old Michael, who had just come up and was standing close beside him.

But the farmer gave no answer. He was dead of fear.

E. M. OWER.

Flat Fishes and Flat Fishes.

WHAT is a flat fish? A fish that is flat, of course. Everybody knows what a flat fish is, or everybody, at any rate, thinks that he or she knows. Yet, if the truth be confessed, very few people can tell accurately what a flat fish is, or can give any very intelligible account of it. Nor need this cause any surprise, for the answer to the question, apparently such a simple one, is long and complex, and, strangely enough, demands not a little recondite scientific knowledge. To understand the matter aright it is necessary to begin *ab ovo*, just as Mr. Knickerbocker began his 'History of New York.' Commencing, then, with the egg—what is it like, and where is it to be found? Here until recently lay the supreme difficulty, for no one knew what the eggs of most flat fishes were like, or in what regions they were to be found. Naturalists had no knowledge concerning the eggs and breeding of marine fishes, and the development of the sole, turbot, plaice, and other species lay wrapped up in obscurity. Happily we have now more light upon these matters, thanks to recent advances in the natural history of the sea, and it has become possible to trace with some fulness and accuracy the growth of a flat fish from the time that it leaves the egg onward.

'What, then, is a flat fish? A skate is a flat fish, and so is a flounder or a fishing-frog (*Lophius*), yet these are by no means closely allied species, some of them being, in fact, further removed from each other than the elephant is from the rat or the cat from the bear. They may, like the skate and the sole, have so little in common, that naturalists place them at opposite poles of fish life.

The merest tyro in zoology can inform us of the differences between the skate and the flounder or sole, but to fully grasp their wide dissimilarity we must call to our aid newly discovered facts, and acquaint ourselves with chapters in the life-history of these fishes of which people generally are wholly ignorant.

Let us glance rapidly over the main points of this wonderful life-history, and we can do no more than touch them lightly, just as Dr. Johnson touched the street posts in passing along the Strand. The fishes that at present inhabit our globe belong for the most part to the *Teleostei*, or bony fishes. Leaving out of account the sturgeon tribe, the lampreys, and the mud-fishes, of all of which there do not exist more than fifty kinds or species, there remain the Order of Bony Fishes, comprising nine or ten thousand species, to which the sole and flounder belong, and the restricted Order of Sharks, to which the skate and rays belong. The skate is in point of fact a kind of shark or selachian, and is classed in the same group as the monster basking shark, the dog-fish, the saw-fish, and the electric torpedo. No doubt these differ from each other greatly, but only in the same way that corpulent Falstaff and slim Master Slender differ, and they are, therefore, naturally grouped together, the differences being more apparent than real. All the features of the shark tribe are found in the skate. The bones of its body, if the *lapsus Hibernicus* be excusable, are not bony, for they are mainly composed of plastic cartilage, and can be readily cut with a knife. The mouth and gills, moreover, are placed underneath the head, while the branchiæ, or gill-plates, are not free comb-like frills, such as we see in the haddock or trout, but consist of soft plates, red in colour, and boxed up between pouch-like chambers, through which the water passes from the mouth out by the external gill-slits. The skin is not smooth-scaled and silvery, but dull, and rough as a file, on account of the small pointed projections which occur all over, especially on the back. Such features in the skeleton, mouth, gills, gill-slits, and rasp-like skin of the skate are essentially those of a shark, and wholly unlike what we find in the flounder and in bony fishes generally. But the anatomy of the internal organs, the heart, stomach, and spiral-valved intestine are very dissimilar to the heart and simple alimentary canal of the flounder. The ribs of the skate are very small and rudimentary, whereas the flounder, turbot, and bony fishes generally have large well-developed ribs. The shark tribe is of a very ancient type, and the soft cartilaginous skeleton, with the other features named, are of a primitive and not of a modern kind at all. The skate may be compared to those venerable sires, increasingly rare nowadays, who cling to the wearing of knee-breeches and buckle-shoes, who prefer the 'Queen's highway' to the modern railroad, and commence their utterances invariably with the solemn Johnsonian 'Sir.'

Once upon a time such men were very familiar in our streets, but they have now well nigh passed away. Precisely so is it with the skate and its congeners. Once in the history of our earth the skate and shark tribe were numerous and powerful. The period of their first appearance is as distant, geologists tell us, as that of the ancient Upper Silurian rocks, when the Welsh and Cumbrian mountains were being formed by the mighty forces of nature. The sharks reigned right royally in that old primeval world; but a period of decline commenced, the number of species began to diminish, until now probably not more than three hundred species exist in our seas. As the sharks decreased the bony fishes increased, and at the present time there are at least twenty kinds of bony fishes for one species of shark in our seas.

If the skate be a shark, why does it differ so greatly in appearance from the huge fellows who look out hungrily for Jack Tar when he sails across the 'line'? The reason is that the skate has suffered a great change of form. It has undergone a process of tremendous flattening. The skate is really a shark flattened out amazingly, like the proverbial policeman in the pantomime. Joey the clown, as every youngster knows, knocks down officer PQ41 to the infinite delight of the Christmas playgoers, and places a weighty cask upon him. With the help of pantaloons, Joe rolls the cask over the unfortunate policeman until he is flattened out upon the stage, just as a cake is flattened out under the rolling-pin of the pastrycook, and then poor PQ41 is lifted up like a mere pasteboard imitation of the sturdy officer in blue. Precisely so is it with the skate. It is flattened out as if by a heavy downward pressure upon its dark back, and the first pair of side fins, or arms, are so enormously expanded as to reach quite to the side of the head, and thus increase the flattened appearance of the fish. The weaker hind pair of fins are much the same as in other fishes, and lie not far from the root of the tail. The tail itself presents many interesting points, and is quite unlike the tail of a bony fish. Bony fishes have an equally bi-lobed tail as a rule, but the skate has a tail unequally lobed or heterocercal, and the end of the backbone runs dorsally into the upper part of the tail fin. In the body of one species of skate a wonderful electric battery exists, consisting of perhaps a thousand hexagonal cells or miniature Leyden jars. Even the common skate possesses electric organs in its tail which were investigated and fully described nearly half a century ago by a French anatomist, while more recently a Dublin professor investigated their structure and properties.

Dr. Burdon-Sanderson, within the last two or three years, has carried on further investigations at St. Andrews, and interesting questions have been raised in regard to their condition and functions, to which reference in this place is of course impossible. The electric organs of the skate are very diminutive, and the shocks produced are infinitely less powerful than those of the related *Torpedo marmoratus*.

The skate, in common with all the shark tribe, is well able to take care of itself. Bold and aggressive as the fabled monsters of Pallene, it is provided with a formidable array of sharp teeth (in the female flattened like a fragment of mosaic), while its skin is coarse as sand-paper and thickly studded with minute denticles, or teeth. A very terror it must be to all of the finny order who venture into its vicinity! Moreover, Swainson is probably right when he affirms that the skate tribe 'pursue their prey with a swiftness surpassing that of all other fishes, like the swallow among birds.' Most fishes, though well armed when mature, are very defenceless when young. Not so with the skate. As if to doubly ensure the security of these well-protected fishes, the earliest stages of the young are marked by striking defensive provisions. Sharks as a rule produce eggs, and the skate is among the number, but the eggs are of a remarkable character. Any one who has watched a fishing-boat bring home its spoils will have noticed, amongst the rubbish brought up by the nets and lines, yellowish or darkly tinted horny cases, sometimes as large as a pocket cigar-case, oblong in shape and pointed at each corner. The four projections at the corners are long, slender, and twisted like the tendril of the vine in the case of the dog-fish, but short and stout in the egg of the skate. These egg-cases are the 'sea-purses' which so puzzle visitors to the sea-side, for whether they are animal or vegetable products the uninitiated often find it difficult to determine. If a favourable specimen amongst those thrown on the beach by winter storms be examined, by tearing away a portion of the horny case, the unborn little skate is exposed to view, curled up like a tiny model in white plaster-of-Paris of the full-grown fish. If alive it will exhibit a wriggling movement, discomfited no doubt by our ruthless act of housebreaking. The long tail encircles a ball of yellow or creamy-white yolk, while a mass of glairy fluid resembling the 'white' of an egg surrounds the fish. By the Swedes this yolk is used as a substitute for that of the domestic fowl. It is hardly necessary to point out how strongly the young skate coiled up in its 'purse' resembles the

chicken in its shell. Both are protected by a hard covering outside, with a soft internal lining of silky membrane, and both are attached to a ball of dense fluid yolk suspended in an albuminous liquid, or 'white.' The resemblance may be traced still further, for in both cases the eggs are produced by the parent after a precisely similar fashion. The shell is secreted, in skate and fowl alike, as a soft tenacious covering by a special part of the oviducal tube before the egg is laid, and the eggs are deposited singly, but the fish takes no further care of them, and the deeper waters of the ocean act as foster-mother, rocking them gently until the hatching period arrives.

Though in so many points the skate resembles a bird, it differs in almost every detail from the bony fishes. Instead of producing a few score eggs in a season, and placing them at the bottom of the sea amongst weeds and shingle, the flounder produces many millions of eggs, and scatters them broadcast through the water. That most dainty of flat fishes, the sole, produces at least a million eggs, a flounder or plaice not less than two millions, while a large turbot has been credited with the deposition of eleven or twelve millions of eggs. Well might Spenser affirm of the 'sea's abundant progeny':—

Whose fruitfull seede farre passeth those in land
And also those which wonne in th' azure sky,
For much more eath to tell the starres on hy,
Albe they endlesse seeme in estimation,
Then to recount the sea's posterity.

Each egg of the flounder is a minute crystalline globe not bigger than a pin's head (about $\frac{1}{30}$ th of an inch in diameter), whereas the skate's egg is ponderous and opaque, and encased in an oblong sheath two or three inches in length. Moreover the eggs of the flounder are not hidden amongst weeds at some depth, but float freely in invisible clouds through the open sea, rising to the surface in very calm weather, and wafted hither and thither by every undulation in the water. No more surprising feature is conceivable than this extreme buoyancy of the eggs of many bony fishes. It is quite a recent discovery, and fishermen even now have little notion that the eggs of our most important fishes used for food float in the sea. Very erroneous notions have prevailed upon this matter, and not many years ago a mass of solid substance was exhibited at a scientific meeting which had been pronounced by fishermen to be the spawn of the turbot. Wherever this substance was found the exhibitor stated trawling

had been forbidden by the authorities. The substance proved on examination to be a species of sponge, and we now know, thanks chiefly to Professor McIntosh of St. Andrews, that the eggs of the turbot are pelagic and float buoyantly like those of other species of flat bony fishes. Long ago an old writer on ichthyology surmised that the flounder tribe produced eggs very different from those of the skate, and declared, somewhat vaguely it must be confessed, that the flounder reproduces its kind not 'by distinct eggs, as in the generality of cartilaginous fishes, but by spawn,' which spawn, he adds, is produced by 'hundreds of thousands'—a statement which, as recent researches show, falls not above but far below the actual facts. A turbot weighing twenty-three pounds contained a roe of five pounds nine ounces in weight, the eggs in which amounted, as Frank Buckland ascertained, to no less than fourteen millions three hundred and eleven thousand two hundred eggs.

Each of these glassy floating eggs is a globular microcosm. Under a powerful lens the young fish is seen as a long cylindrical creature like an eel, except that the head is not pointed, with enormous eyes, and a tail fringed by a delicate web or fin, the entire fish—head, eyes, body, and membranous tail—being perfectly transparent. The young skate, too, when very young is likewise cylindrical, and gradually becomes flattened out, but it measures two or three inches in length, whereas the young flounder is not a twentieth of that length, and is exceedingly minute when hatched out. Seen through a good microscope and magnified a few hundred times, the flounder's egg is indescribably beautiful, the young developing fish being a perfect marvel of delicate organisation. A Japanese toy-maker can skilfully pack a walnut-shell full of tiny figures—animals, fruit, and other carved objects; but even these Lilliputian productions are gross and clumsy in the extreme when compared to the almost invisible egg-globe of the flounder and the intricately constructed inhabitant curled up inside. There is no glairy mass of 'white' within the translucent egg-capsule, but a ball of fluid yolk, colourless as clear jelly, occupies the greater part of the interior, and upon this ball the fish nestles as comfortably as it can. To the crystal sphere of yolk the fish is attached, the tapering body elegantly encircling the mass of food, which is gradually absorbed by the little creature.

If an appropriate egg be examined soon after the parent flounder has deposited it, no little fish will be discovered inside, and the actual formation of the baby flat fish can then

be followed. A particle of jelly is seen to collect at one pole of the globular yolk, and this particle rapidly divides into two, then into four, eight, sixteen, and still smaller particles, until a multitude of such particles or cells lie upon the yolk. This mass of cells is called the germ, and the cells are the bricks, so to speak, out of which the structure of the young fish is built. The construction of a little flounder can be observed stage by stage, and it is far more intricate and wonderful than the building of an elaborately designed mansion out of rude bricks and mortar. Comparing each little cell to a microscopic brick, we must imagine a pile of separate bricks to mysteriously arrange themselves as walls, floor, and roof without visible aid, and we shall gain a notion, though very crude and incomplete, of the process by which a fish is constructed out of the primary cells or particles of protoplasm forming the germ within the egg. The egg and its contents are so perfectly translucent that the miraculous building up of the little flounder can be followed with the greatest facility, and it is a phenomenon, or rather a series of phenomena, which never ceases to arouse the wonder and admiration of the biologist.

Soon the developing fish is prepared to leave its glassy cradle. It then bursts the shell and swims, happy and free, through the open water, for all its transformations are ended. Nay, not ended, for the young flounder has still changes to undergo hardly less marvellous than those through which it has passed while within the egg. It swims about as a wriggling glassy eel, spotted with grains of yellow or brown and black. It is therefore utterly unlike the full-grown flounder. The flounder and the skate pass through equally surprising changes before they reach the adult form. Both are cylindrical and wormlike in their earliest stages, and both are expanded flattened fishes when mature, but they are flattened in a fashion so very dissimilar that it is necessary to describe particularly in what way the flat skate and the flat flounder or sole are unlike. We speak, and rightly so, of the dark upper side of the skate as its back, and thus distinguish that surface from the white under side. We also speak of the coloured upper side of the flounder or sole as the back of the fish, but we are wholly wrong in doing so. How is this? Both fishes are dark above and white below, but the respective sides of each do not really correspond and are far from being the same. For simplicity's sake we will return to the rude illustration given on a prior page. We correctly compared the depressed skate to the policeman unceremoniously flattened by the clown in the pantomime. The

back of PQA1 corresponds to the back of the skate, and his flattened under side, with the row of buttons down the centre, corresponds to the white under side of the skate. But the same comparison will not hold in the case of the flounder or sole. To establish a comparison in the latter case we must imagine the unhappy PQA1 to be lying, not face downward, but upon his side. If in that position the clown be supposed to crush him flat, his flatness is then precisely that of the flounder. The flounder is really a fish greatly compressed laterally, whereas the skate is depressed upon its back. The skate begins to show the flattened form long before it is hatched, but the flounder much more slowly acquires the mature features. One authority long ago placed on record his belief that flat fishes swim on their edge for about a week after hatching, and have their eyes upon different sides of the head. The statement—a most interesting one—is however only partially true. The flounder and other flat bony fishes are much older before they cease to swim on edge. A flounder a month old is quite like a glassy microscopic eel. Some months later—possibly during the third or fourth month of its free life—its rounded back becomes ridged like the blade of a knife, the belly deepens, and with its small head and narrow tail the larval fish resembles a diamond-shaped disc of glass as it swims through the water. A large eye and spots of colour occur on each side, whereas in the mature fish both eyes occur upon one side of the head, while the upper side of the body—not really the back at all—is deeply tinted, and the under side is white.

Usually when the larval fish is about a quarter of an inch in length changes of great moment occur. The left eye shifts from its place and exhibits what may be described as a soaring tendency, for it ascends towards the forehead. A mountain traveller desiring to pass round a jutting crag lingers to gather courage for the perilous venture. Precisely so the wandering eye of the flat fish waits for a little at the margin of the head as if trying to 'screw up' courage before surmounting the sharp ridge. Eyes that roll, eyes that stare, and eyes that melt are familiar enough, at any rate amongst the poets; but wandering eyes—'peregrinating oculars'—are surely novel! When once started on its journey the travelling eye never looks back, and ere long is found close beside its companion eye, from which it is in its early days separated, as in most fishes it continues to be for life. At times the wandering eye may lag upon its way, and it is no uncommon circumstance to find, in April and early summer, flat fishes half

an inch in length with the left eye shifted very little upward from its original place. Reversed flounders too occur, in which the right instead of the left eye has migrated. One small group of flat fishes, which includes the turbot and brill, is characterised by the transference of the right eye, so that both eyes in the mature fish are found on the left side, which is also the coloured side in these fishes.

Professor McIntosh, our chief British authority on the science of the fisheries, states that young fishes of the same age may vary considerably in size, but that the long rough dab and the 'witch' reach a larger size, with considerable depth of body, before the left eye travels round. These fishes, both less common than the flounder, swim somewhat longer in the upright position.

During early summer, the shallow sandy flats upon our coast abound with infantile flat fishes, and, though many months old, they still preserve their glassy transparency, and can only be detected by their bright silvery eyes. They resemble exactly the small species of sole, a native of the Pacific Ocean, less than three inches in length, whose transparency is so great that algæ and stones can be seen distinctly through its body, and hence justly called the transparent sole (*Achirus pellucidus*).

What is the explanation of this astonishing phenomenon, unique in the animal kingdom, by which both eyes become situated upon the same side of the body, the dark-coloured side; while the other side, robbed of its rightful eye, becomes pale and white?

It is explained on the plausible supposition that the flounders of the past gained great advantage by lying upon their left side (the right side in the case of the turbot and brill), and the tendency has been inherited by their living successors.

This is the explanation Darwin offered: but there is the opposing view of the famous French naturalist Lamarck. According to Lamarck the determined efforts of ancestral forms sufficed to produce remarkable alterations in structure, which were transmitted to succeeding generations. Those who adopt this, the Lamarckian theory, look upon the flounder as a fish which has impressed upon it special characters, acquired and transmitted by its ancestors. The view of Darwin, now almost universally accepted, is quite different. Only those peculiarities of structure which are of advantage to the possessor are transmitted. Such peculiarities, due to various external causes, were transmitted and intensified, on the principle of natural selection, or the survival of the fittest. In the flounder we have embodied the features which

enabled its ancestors to gain the ascendancy over its less favoured relatives. All the modifications and distortions, which are forced upon the poor flounder, are therefore like judicious advice inflicted upon the thoughtless, for the good of the recipient. And now to return from our digression to the small developing flounder. The eye begins to shift, and signs of the lateral compression of the body are seen in the young flat fish of to-day, while it swims in the upright position; but, as the depth of the body continues to increase, the upright position becomes more and more difficult to maintain. With a dogged determination worthy of a better cause, the young flounder strives hard to swim upright like other fishes; but it is of little use to battle against the inevitable, and the fish finally succumbs, swimming, at last, like its ancestors, in a flat, horizontal attitude. The young salmon, it is interesting to note, while in the alevin stage, frequently lies upon its side; but the tendency soon departs.

So long as the young flounder swims on edge it is coloured on both sides, but as the habit of lying upon one side becomes confirmed the colour of that surface disappears, and the upper side acquires a deep and permanent tint. Sometimes, as if by mistake, the flounder lies upon its right side, and reversed specimens are thus produced. Sometimes, though this occurrence is comparatively rare, the horizontal position is never assumed. Professor McIntosh published many years ago figures of turbot caught in the Shetland seas, the eyes of which had retained their symmetrical position, and both sides of the body were coloured alike; while a similar specimen, a very fine one, of the same species was caught upon the east coast, and came into the possession of the Scotch Fishery Board in 1884. Such abnormal flat fishes must swim after the manner of other fishes, in the upright attitude, and thus recall the remarkable flattened form of the tropical Chaetodons, or the more familiar British John Dory. Natural freaks of this character cannot occur in the skates, for their white under surface is the true abdominal side in both the young and the mature fish. The only conceivable monstrosity is that actually seen in a rare specimen of the skate, preserved in the museum of the University of St. Andrews. This specimen exhibits a lateral or horizontal malformation, so that the snout, instead of forming a single point, is double, and the head possesses two acutely attenuated snouts, directed, when the animal was alive, to the front, like a double-barrelled gun.

Ungainly as the flounder, plaice, and halibut appear to be,

and awkward as the attitude seems which they habitually assume, there are few fishes more elegant and active in their movements. No one who sees the graceful serpentine motion of the flounder, when leisurely progressing through the water, or dashing with lightning speed from one place of refuge to another, under alarm, can fail to admire its undulations. The trout or salmon simply moves the tail and pectoral fins, but the whole body of the flounder takes part in each undulatory act, for its feeble tail and breast fins are of little service. In the flat bony fishes the breast fins are always very small; but in the sole they are still more diminutive, and in one species, the rare variegated sole, the fin upon the uncoloured side well nigh disappears altogether.

The flounder is a creature sadly misunderstood. One of his eyes, it is true, has gone astray, and the bones of the head and face are somewhat disturbed, especially the frontal bone, while the mouth is most strongly developed on the white under side; but his body, as a whole, does not greatly differ from that of other fishes. Yet people, struck by the oddity of his form, will persistently regard him wrongly, as they regard the skate rightly, and fancy that both are condemned equally, like the serpent, to creep upon their abdominal surface all the days of their life. They are, therefore, surprised, on careful examination, to find the flounder's waistcoat buttons, so to speak, where they expect to see his left arm (or fin), and the buttons of his coat tail where they look for his right arm (or fin).

Flat fishes like the flounder are ground feeders. They usually remain at the bottom, for the swim-bladder which adds so greatly to the buoyancy of other fishes is absent, and it is one of the oddest sights imaginable to see a flock of these quaint creatures, waiting in ambush, with dark upper sides undistinguishable from the brown sand in which they lie, and with protruding eyes on the watch for food. On the appearance of an appetising particle a whole multitude of hungry flat fishes emerge from hiding, and as they cannot take a straight bite, like a cod or salmon, they suck in the food with mouth all awry.

There are many bony fishes as much flattened as the flounder tribe, but they do not swim or lie upon one side. The lovely Chaetodons are typical examples; but they float in the upright position, and resemble fishes cut out of stout cardboard, and gorgeously painted, for the Chaetodon and Holocanthus are amongst the most brilliantly tinted and grotesque forms of tropical fishes. With the exception of the striped zebra sole, our

British flat fishes are not gaily coloured. They seem to be a happy tribe notwithstanding that they are so curiously distorted and, in some respects, so sorely crippled. When startled by a sudden movement in the water, they dart with meteoric swiftness here, there, and everywhere, and raise clouds of sand which safely shield the affrighted fishes. But watch them at their ease as they undulate gently in a horizontal course, mounting upward or slowly descending to the bottom. On reaching the sand each fish gives a slight wriggle—a mere tremor of the body—and is then undistinguishable save to the practised observer. Frank Buckland described the act as involving the raising of the upper third of the body, which is brought down on the sand three or four times with sharp, quick raps; a small cavity is thus made in the wet sand, and the fish works its fins, on each side of its body, with a rapid vibrating motion, until it wholly sinks out of sight. The skate is also an elegant swimmer, the huge expanded lateral fins, undulating powerfully, carry the fish gracefully forward; but its behaviour generally reveals unmistakably the boldness and voracity of the shark.

The rays, or flattened sharks, and the Pleuronectidæ, the flounders or flattened bony fishes, are the veritable giants of the finny race. From the diminutive baby condition the skate may grow to a weight and size truly enormous, specimens not unfrequently being captured weighing upwards of two hundredweight, and measuring eight or nine feet across. But no British species approaches the proportions of the monster Demon Ray (*Cephalopterus diabolus*) of the South Carolina and Florida coasts. This huge ray may reach, it is said, a breadth of eighteen feet, and a length, from the snout to the tip of the tail, of ten feet. Such specimens weigh several tons, and Packard tells us that they have been known to seize the anchors of vessels moored near the shore and drag small craft far out to sea. The flounder tribe, too, can boast enormous members; and the fact is certainly astounding that a minute and almost invisible embryo, not larger than a small pin, should grow to a size such as that of a Plymouth turbot, recorded a hundred years ago, which weighed seventy pounds, or reach the weight of the halibut occasionally seen on the London fishmongers' stalls, of over five hundred pounds, and of a length from snout to tail of no less than seven feet.

EDWARD E. PRINCE.

At the Sign of the Ship.

THERE is a fishing story which I have always believed, knowing the eye-witness of the event who narrates it, but which has been met with scepticism. It is the tale of the Big Trout of Kennaquhair Loch; in deference to local feeling, the real name of the sheet of water is reserved. My friend, who told me the anecdote, was loitering by the water-side one day, when he heard a cry of distress and excitement. Far down the loch he saw an acquaintance waving his hand, and yelling 'Bring the boat.' He rushed to the boat, but it was water-logged, so he ran down the loch side, to aid if he could. He found his friend, with his rod bent double, and fast in a big fish. It was a warm April morning, and the angler had seen the trout rise at a fly, with a 'whamfle' that sent his heart into his mouth. He cast over the spot, the trout rose, and missed. After giving him a rest he tried him again, and hooked him, and had now been attached to him for an hour. The trout had never shown on the surface. On the further side of the loch, within hearing of a shout, a farmer was busy in his garden. 'Bring over the boat,' they yelled, and the farmer soon crossed to their assistance. They embarked, and the mysterious fish led them right across the water, and back again, boring deep, and never showing himself. At length, after four mortal hours, he seemed to weaken, and they went on shore to land him. His silver side turned up in the water, 'like the side of a pig,' and then, a horrid feeling of slackness and emptiness, and the hook came back. The big trout was off, and was no more seen by mortal eyes.

* . *

Now this sounds 'an unco leein' like story.' The common run of fish in this lake are small, a few of from four to five pounds are the rare monsters. What manner of trout could it be

that for four hours resisted a strong double-handed rod? Why, it must have been such a trout as that which was lately left behind on a 'haugh,' when the waters of Loch Tummell ebbed after a flood. According to *Rod and Gun*, this stranded fish was four feet in length, and, though in poor condition, forty pounds in weight. A trout of forty pounds might do all that is told of the fish in the story. Such monsters very seldom rise to fly in any waters. On the Test an overgrown creature of over eighteen pounds was lately slain, but not by rod and line. It is a comfort in loch fishing, often a rather dismal exercise, to remember that these dark deeps may contain fish almost as big as that with which Hiawatha had his famous tussle in the poem. These are the fish that get away. Every one has met them.

* * *

In fishing it is curious to see how little long experience brings of unanimity on certain subjects. For example, as may be read in the latest book of authority, Mr. Halford's, on dry-fly fishing, opinions differ as to when, how, and how much you should 'strike' a rising trout, or whether you should, properly speaking, strike at all. More than two hundred years ago the author of 'The Angler's Vade Mecum' says, 'You must have a quick eye, a nimble rod and hand, and strike with the rising of the fish, or they find their mistake, and putteth out the hook again; others are of opinion never to offer to strike a good fish, if he do not strike himself, till first you see him turn his head after he has taken the fly, and then, say they, the tackle will not strain in striking, if moderately you strike.' But it is not so easy to 'see him turn his head.' 'The Angler's Vade Mecum' is a sensible little volume of 1681, and already contains an advertisement that 'the choicest hooks are made by Mr. Charles Kirby.' But the length of trout rod recommended, sixteen feet and a half, seems exorbitant in an age of nine-foot rods. Our author says he never uses a shorter, even in a small stream. Rods were then either home-made, of hazel, with a yew and whalebone top, or were made by arrow-makers.

* * *

Are there fifty novelists in England just now who make a thousand a year or more by their profession? The statement has been made by one good authority, and disputed by another. True or inaccurate as the statement may be, it is difficult to understand

the interest with which many people discuss literary incomes. Nobody asks what barristers, doctors, or other professional people earn. They all do much better on the whole than authors, because they supply a necessary article. We can do without buying novels, but we cannot get pills, draughts, and legal opinions from the circulating libraries. The literary profession is the least lucrative of all; its very prizes are comparatively insignificant. Yet the writers of gossip are eternally harping on the fabled wealth of their fellow practitioners; wealth which, even when mythically exaggerated, is not on a level with the dream of avarice. One result, probably, is that many incapable persons set out on this apparently easy route of literature and to Pactolus. Another result is, that writing men and women receive at least half a dozen papers for income-tax returns, sent from various centres to various publishers and newspaper offices. Probably barristers, stockbrokers, solicitors, doctors, and dentists are not plagued in this way. The nuisance is one of the many ill turns which paragraphists do to their victims. Why the paragraphist eternally vends inaccurate tattle about a limited number of quiet and unobtrusive people is one of his own strange secrets. The supply of this stuff probably exceeds the demand; but the lines in which the gossip can exercise his invention appear to be limited. Mr. Smith's books, Mr. Brown's habits, Mr. Jones's income—on these he plays the changes day by day and week by week, and his fables go round the globe, and are echoed back by the journals of Alaska and Tobolsk. Yet, all the time, nobody really cares one pin about Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Smith, and their private affairs. Is it not nearly time to give them a rest?

* . *

In a recent law-case, wherein a ghost was said to have appeared to a sexton, a judge thought that 'what the ghost said' might scarcely be evidence. In one rather celebrated case the evidence of a ghost rather damaged the interests of justice. In June 1754, Duncan Terig and Alexander Bane McDonald were tried for the murder of Arthur Davis, a sergeant in General Guise's regiment of foot. The case was published, for the Bannatyne Club, by Sir Walter Scott in 1831. The wonderful activity of Scott was illustrated by his undertaking this task in the crisis of his failing health, and the stress of his other labours. The murdered man, Sergeant Davis, was quartered in 'The Farquharson country,' three years after the Forty-Five. There is, or was,

no wilder and lonelier district in the Highlands. Part of Davis's business was to suppress the wearing of the Highland dress. This may have made him unpopular. He was also known to carry a few guineas, and to wear a curious gold ring. He set out, with some soldiers, to meet others at Glenshee, but his men arrived there without him. He had gone off alone to shoot. He never came back, and, about a year after his disappearance, one Macpherson said that the sergeant's ghost had appeared to him, and denounced McDonald and Terig as his murderers. A girl engaged to Terig was said to have been seen wearing the sergeant's ring. Macpherson said that he was in bed when he first saw the ghost and took it for 'a real living man,' one Farquharson. The ghost was dressed in blue. It led Macpherson to the door, told its tale, and showed where its body lay. Later the ghost appeared again, naked this time, but at first declined to name the murderers. This information, however, it gave at a third or fourth interview, and then 'vanished out of sight in the twinkling of an eye.' It conversed in Gaelic, which the sergeant did not know when he was alive, and this fact told very much against the ghost with the jury. On the other hand, Isobel Machardie, in whose sheiling Macpherson slept, 'saw something naked come in at the door, which frightened her so much that she drew the clothes over her head; when it appeared it came in a bowing posture.' The jury unanimously acquitted the prisoner. They did not like the ghost's security, though the other evidence was rather strong against the men. As Scott says, Macpherson probably knew of the murder in the ordinary way, and invented the ghost, whose commands could not be disobeyed, as an excuse for giving information. 'It impressed on his evidence the fate of Cassandra's prophecies, that, however true, it should not have the fortune to be believed.' It is a curious point that the spectre appeared clothed *before* Macpherson buried the sergeant's body, and naked afterwards. Did he not bury its clothes? Deponent sayeth not.

* * *

The character of Xanthippe, the 'bay mare' who was the better horse, has won sympathy for Socrates. But Mr. Gildersleeve, Professor of Greek in Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, has published a humorous defence of the poor lady. Probably she was young and her husband old. This appears from her carrying her baby in her arms at her last interview with the

philosopher, who was about seventy. Again, her name is an aristocratic name in Athens, like all the names with *hippos* in them, and Socrates was a man of the people. Once more, he was a most irritating man: always dining out, often with ladies of more beauty than character; always bringing his gay and fashionable friends, like Alcibiades, home with him. He filled the little home with bores, and people of rank, and clever people. He learned to dance in his old age. He treated his wife—as Mr. Bennett, in 'Pride and Prejudice,' treated his—with humorous contempt. He would not work at his profession—that of a sculptor. He had a demon, and was proud of it. He went into trances, and was absent-minded. No wonder that poor Xanthippe lost her temper occasionally, especially as Socrates publicly alleged that he married her merely as a trial, and by way of securing a thorn in the flesh. Xanthippe is one of the few Athenian matrons about whom history or tradition tells us anything. But, as Mr. Gildersleeve well remarks, Athenian women could not have been on the low level generally assigned to them, or Sophocles would have had no models for Antigone, Electra, or even Deianira. Their honour was to be inconspicuous, but it does not follow that they were insignificant.

* * *

The following aphorisms, except one, are the reflections of a lady philosopher:—

It is easier to overcome a thousand scruples than one temptation.

The Chinese proverb says, *When the guest goes the host is glad.* (In Africa, when the host lets him go, the guest is glad.)

Contempt is the shadow cast by compassion!

The ninth love is the love that endures.

Some people go through the world with blinkers. These keep to the straight path with ease.

There are bad men who would be less dangerous if they had no good qualities.

Which of these is from Rochefoucauld?

* * *

Nearly two years ago a dream story was published in these pages. In the dream two young ladies had each a black secret,

which was not revealed to the dreamer. The curious may find out, in 'Two and Two, a Tale of Four,' what the secrets were, or must have been, as set forth by Miss Glaisher, who has based a shilling novel on the vision. (Arrowsmith.) To the original dreamer, or unconscious collaborator, the solution seems ingenious. More it would not become the original dreamer to say.

TRANSFORMATION.

Afar from country lanes and leas,
O'er pavements foul with stain and spot,
I hastened, holding—half forgot—
In careless hands, a clustered knot
Of rosy, frail anemones.

The sun shone round them, gold and rose,
And sudden wonder dawned on me,
For that mean by-way seemed to be
More fair than isles of Arcady,
Or splendours of eternal snows.

Transfigured stretched the squalid street,
With all its tawdry shops arow:
I felt the cowslips round me blow,
The cold spring twilights clear and slow,
The dews of dawn about my feet.

O wonder-wealth without alloy,
Breath from the far-off fields divine!
The spring sun sheds his amber wine,
And makes the viewless glories mine,
The earth's illimitable joy.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

A. LANG.

The 'Donna.'

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